Man an Eternal Probationer

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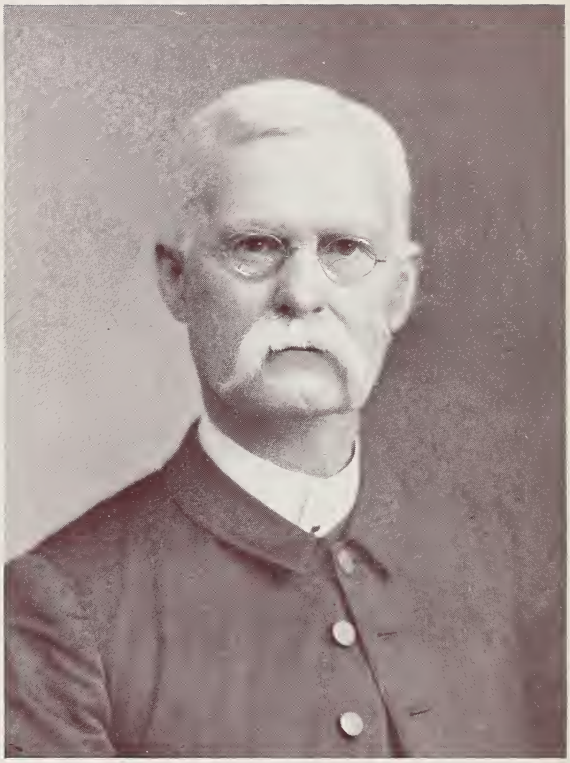

Yours Very Affectionately,
Green P. Jackson.

MAN AN ETERNAL PROBATIONER

BY REV. GREEN P. JACKSON

OF THE TENNESSEE CONFERENCE

"We have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." (1 Tim. iv. 10.)

"Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

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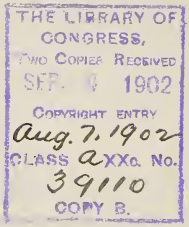

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BY
GREEN P. JACKSON

TO THE MEMORY OF MY SAINTED WIFE,

Mary Price O'Neal Jackson,

WHO, FOR MORE THAN THIRTY-ONE YEARS,
WAS THE HAPPINESS OF MY HOME
AND THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE.

Prefatory Note.

Of course all questions referring to the future years of time or relating to the coming ages of eternity are obliged to be more or less speculative and uncertain. And for this reason they must be in a large measure merely conjectures put forth by us concerning certain things, as we have conceived them in our minds, which may or may not come to pass as we have anticipated. Now these suppositions, or guesses, are generally, as we think, based safely and discreetly upon the admitted facts and recognized disclosures of divine revelation, or upon the clear discoveries and established developments in the natural sciences, as we understand and accept them.

And in view of these simple statements, we can never reasonably claim to be justifiable, under any circumstances, in presenting or maintaining our notions in regard to these matters, however dear they may be to us, in a dogmatic spirit or with an arrogant bearing toward others who may happen to differ from us, as the chances for mistake and failure are always too many and too great. The most that we can afford, at the present, with anything like becoming grace, is to hold them in abeyance, and with modesty and unpretentious confidence frankly submit them to the candid and sober judgment of others for their approval or rejection; and then await with patience, quietness, and resignation the swift flight of the fleet-

ing years of time and the slow lapse of the long lagging epochs of eternal ages either to vindicate the peculiar views which we have so fully loved and fondly espoused in this life, or else expose their fallacy. And so it must become evident to all who favor freedom of speech, and do not fear an investigation in matters of faith and practice, that the widest liberty of expression ought to be allowed to men along these dim lines of unsettled thought which are found to be very fascinating to some minds and perfectly harmless to all. For it is a plain proposition that if we ever make anything like important and profitable advances in the unfolding of illimitable truth, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, we will be compelled sometimes to come into sharp collision with, and occasionally forced, whether with cheerfulness or regret to ourselves, to depart entirely from tenderly fostered and decidedly popular opinions which were once most heartily embraced by our pious, patriotic, and noble fathers; and which were bravely, honestly, and persistently defended by them, and faithfully handed down to us in the sacred annals of the hallowed past.

And just now, at this particular period in the thrilling history of the ever-adventurous human race, the whole world appears to be in the midst of a radical and revolutionary change which most clearly indicates a transition state in all things. Old creeds in the Churches, venerable with age, and old platforms in political parties, hoary with years, are unmistakably slipping rapidly away from us. And as much as we love and admire them, we are perfectly willing to let them go; for in parting with them, we come at once into possession

of others which are as wisely framed and far better adapted to us and this wonderful age in which we are living.

And in view of these stirring and suggestive events, may we not reasonably and justly claim and expect to receive the tender sympathy and tolerant indulgence of an advancing, enterprising, and generous reading public with us in the unusual positions and candid utterances set forth in this little book, which is itself the result of the gradual growth of a divine impression made upon the warm affections of the heart, as well as the production of the most thoughtful years of mature life. And now we send it forth upon its anxious mission with an earnest, devout, and continuous prayer that it may prove to be a fruitful source of hope, help, and happiness to men everywhere.

And may the kind and courteous reader and the humble, grateful writer so live here below that they shall meet each other above, to spend an eternity of bliss upon the bright, sunny plains of immortality and the clear, cloudless summits of the beautiful mountains of everlasting life.

GREEN P. JACKSON.

NASHVILLE, TENN., August 31, 1902.

"One question more than others all
Of thoughtful minds implores reply:
It is, as breathed from star and pall,
What fate awaits us when we die?"

Man An Eternal Probationer.

PART I.

A Plain, Simple Presentation of the Subject.

AN is on trial. The term of his probation never ends in an absolute sense. He controls the run of his life during the transient years of time, and there is no intimation that he will not continue to do so throughout the roll of the eternal ages of the future. Vice and virtue, so far as he is concerned, originate with him. They are but the overt expressions of his will power, put forth by him in the choice of actions. And so he places himself, by his own voluntary option, in a state of happiness or unhappiness. And heaven must forever be his reasonable reward for righteousness, and hell his just retribution for wickedness. Thus he necessarily stands before us in his strange connection, both with this present world and the one which is to come.

Future punishment, however, is here proposed for special consideration. As generally held, it is confessedly a horrible theme for contemplation or discussion; but may not the ordinary notion concerning it, which is so prevalent, prove on closer examination to be incorrect, at least in some particulars? And if so, ought it not to be modified?

But we certainly should be slow in making up our minds on this question of supreme importance. And that we may reach a safe and satisfactory conclusion

in regard to it, we must not only be cautious and deliberate, but we must also avoid everything like haste or heedlessness in connection with it. And then if, as we have been assiduously taught to believe from our early childhood, it is true, it will be found, under the closest scrutiny and severest tests, to comport perfectly with the voice of revelation and reason. Then let us try to look critically, but at the same time candidly, into the matter.

AN is a free agent. This is frankly admitted. And at the same time it is readily accepted that he is placed under the restraints of moral law, which he is competent of meeting with becoming obedience, or rejecting with defiant violation, as he may see fit to decide for himself. Hence he is reasonably and justly held responsible for all his actions, whether they be good or bad. And being perfectly free now, he must remain free forever. This is essential to him—indispensably so, in order that his responsibility may continue with him always. But freedom of will necessarily implies choice between good and evil things. So that doing righteous deeds or performing wicked works must, in the very nature of things, invariably result in building up a character in harmony with them. And it is a conceded fact, fully sustained by the experience and observation of men, that character never fails to fix destiny for weal or woe. Now everybody knows well enough that any man can change his course of conduct as long as he lives in this world. And if his manner of living and acting is completely at his command while he remains

here, who can say that such ceases to be the case with him in any place or at any time hereafter?

But does it not naturally follow that if there should ever come a period in the history of any man in which he is deprived of the power and precious privilege of independent choice, he can no longer be held responsible for anything that he may think, say, or do? Neither does it matter materially when or where this fatal misfortune might come upon him, as the ruinous result would be the same. For with the end of the freedom of will all responsibility must stop. It stands out plainly to reason and common sense that if he cannot do that which he ought to do, or refrain from doing that which he is doing, he can by no means be held accountable in any way for what he does or does not accomplish.

No government on the face of the earth is so unreasonable and cruelly unjust in the requirements and demands which it makes of its citizens and subjects as to inflict sore punishment upon them for things which they could not, by their untrammeled choice and power, bring about or prevent from coming into existence. And "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right"? We surely ought to strive to be reverential and pious enough to believe that he will. We need a better knowledge of the true character of his administration, and want a closer acquaintance with his merciful management of its affairs. However, we may safely accept it as a reliable principle in the divine economy that no man will be compensated or punished for any event or occurrence that may happen to take place over which he did not have a controlling influence. Even the civil courts and political powers

of this world grant this much to men in their dealings with them. And to hold otherwise must prove destructive to all the grand and vital principles of justice and equity as recognized and enforced by all wise and prudent governments, whether existing among Christian nations or heathen peoples. If such a thing were feasible—if it could be done at all—God could as rationally punish a beam of timber, block of stone, or rod of iron, for breaking, splitting, or bending, as to pour out eternal wrath upon a poor, wretched, lost, and undone sinner in the dreary regions of the damned, if there is no possibility, not the slightest chance, of thereby improving his desperate condition, reclaiming him from his unfortunate alienation, and restoring him to the forfeited favor of Heaven. But if, as we have been confidently assured, he will grow constantly worse and worse under this treatment, while the mournful ages come and go, and his tortures are to become severer and yet still more severe in the dark and dreadful domains of an endless perdition, would it not be far better for all concerned to blot out the ruined one? And would not stern justice join tender mercy in an urgent request that this be done? It could be done. God who made him certainly could annihilate him. And it is readily seen that complete obliteration is infinitely preferable to an eternal and ever-increasing agony. Common sense clearly lies on that side of this gloomy and hideous question. It needs no argument to set it up. Vastly more scriptural proof can be furnished in its favor than can be arrayed against it. Surely if there is a man anywhere in the whole earth whom God can never save, we may fondly hope that he will expunge such

a one entirely from existence. Why should he perpetuate his miserable being simply to keep him confined in the hot fires and raging flames of an endless hell? What manner of good can ever come out of such an utterly horrible procedure? Why, it would fill the world with the shades of sadness, and overwhelm all sympathetic natures with painful but unavailing sensations of heartfelt commiseration. It would appall the entire universe. However, is it not strictly true that freedom of will is an indispensable element in the very constitution of human nature? Then, if this be so, to take it away from man would forever wreck his accountability. Therefore such a thing can never be done. Just as long as a man remains a man he must be allowed to do right or wrong according to his own unhampered choice, that he may be held personally responsible for his character and condition. So that, whether they be good or bad, he is self-conscious that they are the immediate and legitimate results of his own choosing and doing.

And it is an unalterable law of the very being of man that he is always made happy or miserable by the exercise and final determination of his will power. According to his volition, he does that which is right and fills his pure heart with the untold joys of heaven, or else he does that which is wrong and floods his evil soul with the indescribable agonies of hell. And thus he makes his own happiness or wretchedness. God has mercifully and wisely so arranged and adjusted the principles of his great moral system of law and order to us that we can build up for ourselves a beautiful Paradise and revel in its pleasures and delights, or we may form our own perdition and writhe in its pains

and tortures. Then we must not attribute our lack of transporting bliss or charge our distressing compunctions of guilt to any other person than ourselves. And this strange and singular capability of passing at will from one of these diverse states to the other one must be preserved to us perpetually. We can never, under any circumstances, surrender it ourselves, or be deprived of it by any one else. It must remain incontestably in our possession forever. And we cannot fail to recognize and realize that this is just and right. Then may we not reasonably suppose that death itself will not be able to end this established order of things with us, or even to change it materially? Rather, are we not obliged to conclude that it cannot do it? As we leave the receding shores of time, so we shall plunge into the boundless ocean of eternity. That is to say, we must carry all of our marvelous powers with us, and keep them, world without end. They belong to us exclusively and everlastingly. We may dishonor and degrade, but we can never lose or destroy, these sublime and lofty qualities which God has seen fit to bestow upon us for his glory and our good. And we may have the same or similar powers and opportunities for being righteous and practicing righteousness, or for being wicked and doing wickedness, in that mysterious world all along through the eternal ages which have been so abundantly afforded us in this life. We may also retain in undiminished measure and strength all the possibilities, privileges, and responsibilities for changing our character and condition over there which we have here. But some of us have shamefully neglected and signally failed to properly appreciate and wisely

improve them here; so we may continue to do in the future life. Now all this implies and suggests that the destinies of men are not unchangeably fixed at death. They can never be immutably settled. This cannot be without doing destructive violence to the nature of man. And therefore it cannot be done at all.

And, as we have already intimated, it may be that sinners will repent, believe, and be saved in the next world as in this life. Or they may persist in impenitency there, and abide in condemnation as in the days of their flesh.

It has been said that though crowned in heaven we may still prove recreant and unfaithful to God, abandon our places in glory, forfeit salvation, and descend to the doleful regions of deep despair. Even that great and good man, Bishop Enoch M. Marvin, in his wonderful little book entitled "The Work of Christ," says: "Now and then volition may assert itself capriciously, and a spirit give itself up recklessly to ruin against the full attractions of Godhead."

This startling statement may be true. We have no good and sufficient reason to contradict it, but we find much to commend it to our favorable attention and serious consideration. Then we most respectfully submit the very natural inquiry: If the saint can slip down from heaven into hell, why may not the sinner struggle up out of hell into heaven? Who can furnish a satisfactory answer to this question, and show us why this should not be the case?

In the discussion of this important matter, let us try to disabuse our minds of all prejudice, predilection, and especially let us endeavor to get clear of the

blinding influence of passion, that we may look quietly, calmly, and discreetly into the difficult and perplexing problem, so that we may reach a sure and safe conclusion in regard to it. And in this way we shall retain our reason and judgment in clearness and soundness; and when we come to render our final decision in the case, we will be able to do it with fairness and impartiality.

If the sanctified and saved in glory may become disaffected, discontented, disobedient, and rebellious toward God, and, as the sinning angels are said to have done, renounce their shining stations above and sink down to the nethermost abysm of woe, it does seem but reasonable, just, and right that the lost in the black realm of rayless and starless night should be allowed to repent, believe, be forgiven, and pass up from the sorrowful shades of sin and death to the rapturous joys of heaven. And the plausibility of the one assumption certainly must suggest and set up the plausibility of the other one. And it would seem that all orderly minds must come at last to see it in that light.

Why should it be made such an easy matter for men to break into the murky dungeons of perdition, and so very difficult for them to find their way out of them? Can it possibly be true that the Lord takes greater pleasure in the destruction than in the salvation of men? Surely this cannot be the case. Such a thing must be profoundly and permanently repugnant to him in thought and feeling. It can only be regarded as antagonistic to his holy nature and immaculate character. Then we could commit no higher offense than to bring such an accusation against him;

for his goodness and purity cannot be impugned or impeached.

He is the Father of men—of all men, everywhere and in every condition and station of life. Then what tender and sacred relations must exist between the Almighty and his helpless children! And will not his fatherhood secure for us a milder course of treatment at his hands? It certainly ought to do it. What earthly parent—if such a thing were possible—would think of inflicting insupportable, unmitigated, endless torture upon his poor, unfortunate, and erring child, without the least hope or chance of improving or in any way benefiting the defenseless sufferer by it? Now Jesus would answer this question by saying:

> If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

That is, to say the least of it, comforting.

Parental chastisement, under all circumstances, must have full in view as its chief object and dearest aim the reformation, amendment, and improvement of the refractory child. And when it fails in this superlative intention, it ceases to be corrective, loses its advantages in the management of the family, and degenerates into downright cruelty. The penalty for violated law should always be executed as tenderly as possible. Even inexorable justice yields this much to the doomed culprit.

But some one may be tempted to say that we are pressing into service an old hackneyed and worn-out illustration. Well, if so, we readily grant it. But still, it must in all fairness be admitted that this, as a

simple fact in itself, cannot in the least degree or remotest sense weaken its force or strip it of its fitness in this argument. Here its great age and much usage do not damage it. In this particular instance it fills its place well; and the effect of its application must be felt and appreciated by all.

It should be borne in mind and cherished in heart that our heavenly Father is infinitely better and wiser in his treatment and controlment of us than our earthly parents can be. His compassion, affection, and concern for us can know no limitation or abatement. We are his children; and for this reason he will love us forever. And as long as he loves us, he must seek to make us happy and not miserable.

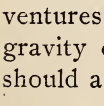
This much we might naturally expect to receive from our fathers according to the flesh; then how much more from him who is "the Father of our spirits"? His grace and pity can never fail or forsake us. Such a thing is impossible, both in thought and fact.

If we only wish to become good and be happy, no difference when or where the heaven-born disposition and soul-inspiring desire may come to us, the Lord will not only permit us to do so, but he will himself most gladly assist us in obtaining the coveted blessing. And to accomplish this end he would tax the richest resources of his omniscience.

And this is just what he is doing. Is it intimating too much to say that if such a thing could be he would willingly bankrupt infinite mercy to save lost souls, yea, one lost soul? Surely it could not, since he has already given "his only begotten Son" for sinners.

E are painfully aware of the fact that the peculiar views which we are setting forth and advocating in this little book will hardly meet with a warm welcome and cordial indorsement from all who may chance to examine them. And we are not entirely ignorant of, or indifferent to, the evident danger which still lurks in the words of the wise man, and speaks to us in lingering tones of threatened danger, saying, "And whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him."

Nevertheless, however true this may be, hedge-breaking must and will go on; and no manner of proscription from any quarter can stop it. But he who ventures to break the hedge should weigh well the gravity of the act before he undertakes it, lest he should afterwards regret it.

 T will greatly relieve matters in the discussion of this difficult question to have clear and correct conceptions of what really constitutes Heaven and Hell, which are ever present in our hopes and fears. On thorough examination, we may find that they are more properly regarded as states than places, though it has not been our custom to think or speak of them after this fashion. We have been in the habit of looking upon the locality itself as being in some way productive of weal or woe to us. And yet, in our more thoughtful moods, we know full well that it is not the outward circumstances that make a man happy or unhappy; but it is the inward condition of the man himself. Joy or sorrow is each one of them a condition of the mind which

can be affected but slightly at last by extraneous surroundings.

And hence the old theory, which once prevailed almost universally among men, that hell is a shoreless and bottomless lake of fire and brimstone, into the immeasurable, turbulent, boiling depths of which incorrigible sinners are plunged with great force and swiftness, and upon whose fiery, burning billows, tipped with flickering flames of damnation, lost souls are forever tossed and dashed about, and violently driven against the rough, jagged rocks and black, storm-beaten reefs of hopeless despair, has been almost entirely relegated to the deadness of the past as suitably belonging to the crude notions of an immature age. And even now, as we look upon these curious relics of strange thought, we feel, with something akin to awe, their misleading influences still lurking and lingering about us. There seems to be a sort of self-induced superstitious belief, which has obtained much favor among some good, pious people, that there is a derelict world of wickedness and woe, and all who come into contact with that accursed orb are made thereby wretched forever. There is also an enchanting impression abroad that there is likewise a bright, beautiful world of purity and bliss called Heaven, which contains all the elements and principles of perfect peace and happiness within its celestial sphere, and all who are so fortunate as to once gain a footing upon its bewitching surface are immediately filled with endless joy.

Now these things are merely the unsubstantial but dazzling fancies of an overindulged imagination, "and nothing more." They are entirely without anything

like a solid foundation either in reason or the word of the Lord. And, therefore, they must be more or less deleterious. If we follow them, we are obliged to lose sight of the genuine properties and qualities which constitute happiness or misery.

Perhaps the truth of the matter will be found in some such proposition as the following: Heaven or hell is simply the conscious condition of blessedness or wretchedness which personal character must always produce within us. For example, a good man is happy just simply because he is good; and for this very reason it could not be otherwise with him. What he is and what he does furnish him abundantly with unwasting stores of imperishable comfort. He feels satisfied that God approves his ways, and knows that his fellow-men love and respect him.

And, on the other hand, a bad man is necessarily unhappy. An abiding sense of guilt fills him with keen remorse. He is ever reaping the bitter fruits of his evil doings. His wicked works haunt him still; and they open up in his aching heart and blasted life sweeping torrents of self-inflicted ruin. He needs no deeper or hotter hell than this. Nothing worse can ever come unto him; no, nothing at all.

So it appears that every man creates for himself his heaven or hell, and carries it around daily in his own bosom. And he may continue to do this forever. Just as he decides to be, so he is. Upon his determination he soars direct to heaven or sinks straight to hell.

Then we may confidently assure ourselves that while on earth, tabernacling in bodies of flesh and blood and associated with each other in the different

walks and various pursuits of life, we are at the same time testing by way of actual and adequate realization in our experience the pleasures of the crowned saints in glory or the pains of the suffering sinners in perdition. And they are as real, though not as full, now as they will be when we pass the judgment bar of God. And in view of these important facts, we are told that the righteous have "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come." That is to say, they have as truly antedated the happiness of heaven amid the trials and troubles of this world as that they have been able to verify that "the word of God is good."

And it is also affirmed of the wicked:

> He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.

According to this, it is even now with the sinful man as if he had stood up in judgment and received his dooming sentence. Then a man does not have to die to suffer the tortures of perdition, as we have been accustomed to think. They come to him here, for if he believes not on Jesus Christ, he is already damned—*condemned.*

And as we know that men can change these conditions as long as they live, we naturally infer that they will continue to be able to do so after death. Probation is the necessary and normal estate of man, and therefore it must be secured to him as long as he is allowed to remain in existence. And it would seem that this is obliged to be equally true of all intelligent, responsible, moral beings of every name and order.

Death can make no change or disturbance so far as the inherent rights of man to perfect freedom of choice

and action are concerned. Nor can it in any material sense interfere with his established relations with God or his fellow-man.

The Bible does not teach clearly, by implication or otherwise, that final doom follows immediately upon the dissolution of the body. But on the contrary, its uniform utterances distinctly lead us to the opposite opinion, as we shall plainly see when we come to consult its sacred pages more directly in connection with this puzzling question.

UT if it be true that men can obtain remission of sins in the future world, is it not likely that they will all finally repent, believe in Jesus, and be saved? That is certainly the only legitimate conclusion to be reached in regard to the matter. And that is just what we pray and hope for, and confidently expect to see.

The brightest and most entrancing dream of our life can be fully realized alone in the consummated happiness of the whole world. And the possibility of this is based upon the great, consoling truth that all men are redeemed by the most precious blood of the divine Son of God.

E may be looking for some radical changes at death which will not materialize. In all likelihood these strange things which we have been depicting for ourselves can never come to pass. It may turn out that these grotesque

expectations have no existence outside of, and apart from, our own misguided anticipations.

In our usual way of thinking, death and the unknown future which lies beyond it are not very cheerful but rather gloomy views. Much of this prevailing delusion, however, may be attributable to our early education and training. And this makes it the more difficult for us to shake it off or get rid of it in any way.

ERHAPS a closer and more earnest study of the complex structure and nature of man might assist us much in unraveling the mysterious intricacies in connection with the abstruse and most vexed question which we have undertaken in this investigation. And so we willingly address ourselves to the rather difficult but engaging task before us. And we are aware of the fact that we must weigh our thoughts and words well before submitting them to others for their consideration and approval.

Man is a composite being. He is a threefold creature in his nature; that is to say, he combines three distinct things in his wonderful make-up. In his personality we find him holding together three things which are entirely different from each other in character and use. The first one of these, in the order of his creation or, speaking more accurately, formation, is his body; the next is his spirit; and the last is his soul.

Now the body is the tabernacle of the soul. The soul is strangely incased in the body. And for a while it sojourns in it here on earth, as in a tent. The soul

imparts form and beauty to the body. It gives significant expression to the features of the body, animates it with vital fire, and thrills it with the sublimated, delicate, pure, and delightful sensations of life.

And the soul is itself the magnificent temple of the spirit. The spirit is divinely enshrined in the soul, which is its appointed abode and most suitable habitation. The spirit confers eternal majesty upon the soul and floods it with the fadeless splendors of immortality. The soul owes its vast powers and imperishable possessions to its permanent connection and inseparable companionship with the spirit. They are closely and vitally joined together in the essential intimacies of an endless union.

The soul, under the predominating and sanctifying presence and influence of the spirit, transforms the inferior body into a beautiful, chaste, and becoming residence for its immaterial and Godlike occupants. And this is the natural and normal condition of humanity, in which it is enabled to rise to its most exalted heights, reach its greatest attainments, and effect its grandest achievements.

HE carnal appetites and passions belong strictly and solely to the body. They are very important and valuable, and were given to us for special, wise, and noble purposes and uses. The whole of the mighty and magnificent fabric of domestic, social, and political life, in all their different ramifications, various modifications, natural relations and changes, uses and abuses, is founded, built up, and established upon them in this present

mode of existence. But they are temporal and transient in their nature and duration. Therefore, at the death and in the dissolution and decay of the body, they cease to be. They are then completely abolished. And this is clearly what Jesus means to teach when he says to the Sadducees:

> The sons of this world (Greek, *this age, or lifetime*) marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world (Greek, *that age, or endless life*), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Then, according to this most expressive declaration of our Lord, these carnal endowments are peculiar and merely incidental to the body, and must molder away in the lifeless dust of the dull earth, never to come up again from the darkness of the grave and cold obstruction of death.

HE marvelous mental faculties and intellectual powers, all of them, are located in the soul. And these amazing gifts, bestowed upon man's higher nature, must survive the disorganization of the body. To release the soul from the body is to set it free from the shackles and trammels of flesh and blood. It is to lift from it the heavy burdens of polluted morality, and turn it loose to expatiate and revel with unrestricted liberty and undiminished delight in the boundless fields of devout thought and hallowed contemplation, which will unfold themselves in perennial beauty to its unflagging

energies and tireless activities. But while pent up in the narrow chambers of the body, it is pulled down to the low, groveling, base, and perishing things of this earth. And thus it is that the body humiliates the soul.

LL the religious tendencies and susceptibilities, the worshiping capacities, possessions, and enjoyments, found in the highest nature and life of man, are the inherent properties and essential principles of his spirit. And it is the spirit in man, rather than his soul or body, which differentiates him from the mere animal creation about him. And it is that also which brings him into constant communion with Almighty God, his Maker, and associates him with the higher spiritual orders of eternity. The angels of heaven count it an honor conferred upon them to be allowed to visit him in his earthly home and look after his interests as the rightful claimant of salvation and eternal life.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

OW the history of man shows that sin with him generally commences in his somatic nature. The animal appetites and passions are fruitful sources of much trouble to him. They are the seas upon whose stormy waters he is most frequently wrecked and lost.

The first act of disobedience indulged in was committed by the soul under the impulse and force of the

fascinated desire and bewildered sense of sight and taste in the body, wrought up to the highest pitch of fatal venture by the beguiling deception and dangerous allurements of the wicked one. And through the blighting influences of that most unhappy transaction the beautiful, fresh, fragrant flowers of man's bright Eden-home withered away, and the soft, beaming, blue skies, bending in lovely brilliancy over the fading Paradise of his innocent delights, grew excessively dark with the gathering and spreading clouds of threatened evils, to be poured out upon him and his posterity in constant showers of misfortunes and troubles to the end of time; and perhaps long afterwards.

And when the old, crafty, wily, and skillful enemy to all good attempted to decoy the divine Son of Mary from the lofty paths of virtue into the devious and destructive ways of sin, he tried to conceal carefully the demoniacal design which he had in view under the specious but false show of tender, sympathetic concern, and artfully addressed the tempting solicitations and suggestions to him through the clamoring appeals of a powerful appetite, which was enraged by protracted hunger. Nor did his chosen course of attack evince anything like weakness or ignorance upon the part of the tempter. He sought the ruin of humanity; and, though foiled in his wicked effort to accomplish it, he cleverly struck it at its weakest and most vulnerable point. Generally with shrewdness, and too often with success, he makes his assaults upon man's lowest and vilest nature. He knows well the surest and easiest way to victory—and he takes it.

HE recovery of man from sin and his restoration to the favor and friendship of God invariably begin in his pneumatic nature. The very possibility of salvation and eternal life is confined to the spirit of man. And the Spirit of God is the only power that can quicken the spirit of man into newness of life, when it is dead through trespasses and sins. The Holy Spirit, through the spirit of man, operates upon his soul; and then, through the soul, reaches his body.

OW the psychical nature of man is the place of general rendezvous, where the carnal and spiritual forces in him come together in fearful contention as to what shall be his doom. It is the great battle ground upon which vice and virtue meet in fiercest conflict, the one striving to win the victory over the other. And too often vice defeats virtue. Virtue frequently meets with disastrous failure where it ought to be crowned with perfect triumph.

But death comes at last, and all this is changed. Only think of the incalculable advantages and benefits which may be realized when the spirit of man, incorporated in the soul, which has been relieved of the cumbersome body, shall stand out in the clear, assimilating light of the unveiled presence of his Father, the God of infinite mercy and compassion, looking into his smiling countenance; and at the same time, feeling the strong attraction of the benign face and loving heart of the gentle Saviour, and without the hindrances of frail, fallen flesh and blood; and with all the tender, melting, and helpful influences of the

atonement at hand; and the Holy Spirit willing, ready, and anxiously waiting to conduct him through sincere repentance and fiducial trust into the transporting raptures of pardon, peace, and purity. In the contemplation of this ecstatic vision, who can conceive or tell the grand results and glorious developments which such an hour may bring forth? Sublimest scenes of hope rise up to greet the free and innocent indulgence of fascinated fancy. We look forward, and are entranced with unspeakable delight.

It is sadly true that the wild and almost ungovernable propensities and proclivities of man's physical nature toward evil prove to be to him a boiling maelstrom of numberless perils, whose devouring vortex of whirling sensual gratification, like rushing waters, sweeps away his spiritual fortunes and hopes with raging and well-nigh resistless fury. But at last the end comes, and life's fitful fever is over. And so it may finally turn out that even dreaded death is a real benediction to man rather than the dark parenthesis in the mournful history of the race that it is habitually looked upon as being. Things are not always in fact what they seem to be. Sometimes, as we may find out hereafter, our best blessings are sent to us, even by the soft hand of love, in gloomy disguise.

> God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform.

E may pause long enough here to dispose of a disturbing question, which will very likely present itself in a troublesome form to some thoughtful minds. It may be asked with a degree of plausibility, Is not this line of reasoning

bringing us dangerously close to the teachings of unconditional universalism? We answer positively, and without hesitation, *No.* That which we hold is far from being universalism. What we are advocating is simply the divine plan of human salvation as taught by Jesus Christ himself, according to the reports of the evangelists as preserved and handed down to us by them in the gospels. Truly it does mean universal salvation in the sense that all men will be saved ultimately on the one and only condition of pardon, which is faith in the name of the Son of God, our only and all-sufficient Saviour. No man can be saved at any time, anywhere, or on any conditions who does not believe on him. But whosoever believes on him with all his heart, as he is required to do in the New Testament Scriptures, must be saved, is obliged to be saved, is saved, whether in time or eternity, whether on earth or in perdition. Faith in Jesus Christ brings salvation to the penitent soul with infinite certainty.

And it is generally conceded now that man is endowed with perfect freedom of will. And if that be true, he certainly must retain the ability and right to believe or disbelieve as long as he exists.

Then the great question at issue is as to whether he will, at any period in the everlasting ages of the future submit himself willingly to God through faith and be saved, or voluntarily persist in impenitency and madly continue to suffer the agonies of damnation. The capacity and privilege to pursue either of these diverse courses for himself, according to his own choosing, clearly seems secured to him forever. There is but little if any room left for doubt in this matter.

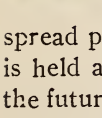
OW Calvinism tells us, with unwavering confidence, that the elect, the exact number of whom is so definitely fixed in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that it can neither be increased nor diminished, were redeemed unconditionally. Therefore, they—and only they—will be saved. So there need be no fear, as there can be no doubt, about their final glorification in heaven. They are as sure of their bright crowns, if this doctrine be reliable, as if they were already shining with dazzling light around their triumphant brows. And be it remembered that they are to receive them, not because they have won them by obedience and faithful service to their Lord, but simply because they belong to the favored few—God's own elect children.

Universalism, in its unrestricted sense, which is merely the extension and expansion of Calvinism, affirms with the fullest assurance that all men are already saved unconditionally. And hence it teaches that all punishment for sin is in this life, and that all men enter immediately into a state of endless happiness at death.

Of course these two adverse systems of soteriology represent the extremest notions in regard to the matter. The former contains the narrowest and the latter the widest conception that has yet been formed concerning the work of Christ. And it is, to say the very least of it, worthy of notice that the theology which at best seeks to save but a meager portion of mankind has found a great many more admirers and advocates than the one which proposes to save all without the loss of any. There seems to be a native

proneness and readiness among men to expect condemnation for their fellows, rather than pardon. It is very difficult to understand why this should be so, as it is in direct and hopeless antagonism with both reason and revelation.

And these two systems, when brought into connection with the doctrine of the atonement, present it alike to us as being purely a commercial transaction. They claim that "Jesus paid it all" when he died upon the cross. And in their estimation the beneficiaries have been rescued from all danger, and are not further liable to penal execution in any respect whatever, so far as the future is concerned.

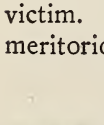
 UT there is another phase of universalism which demands a brief observation. It is known as restorationism. It has attracted no little attention. It has acquired a widespread popularity. It is a most plausible theory. It is held and taught in it that bad men must suffer in the future world for their sins to the entire satisfaction of violated law. It is also contended that the punishment will be carefully meted out in exact proportion to the real turpitude and demerit of the crimes which have been committed, both as to severity and continuance. These ostensible restrictions and limitations greatly commend the pleasing notion to many honest and well-informed people.

But after all it reminds one very much of the Roman Catholic purgatory which has obtained such a strong hold and spread so extensively in that great Church; a succinct but very clear and strong state-

ment of which we have furnished us by the discontented and restless ghost of Hamlet's murdered father, in which Shakespeare represents it as saying to the horrified young prince:

> I am thy father's ghost,
> Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,
> And for the day confined to fast in fires,
> Till the foul crimes done in the days of my nature
> Are burned and purged away.

A complete refutation of this august and ancient conception, and deception as well, is readily found in the palpable fact that punishment in itself can never, under any circumstances or conditions, purchase pardon, or in any other way procure it for the unfortunate victim. It possesses no such magical properties or meritorious principles—never has, and never will.



RULY the nature and duration of the suffering to which the perversely wicked must be consigned after death make one of the most important problems that has ever engaged the attention of man. He cannot afford to treat it with indifference or neglect. Yet in his application to this matter he appears to have belabored and bewildered himself with a mighty multitude of inconsistent, discordant, and conflicting opinions which cannot be brought into anything like harmony either with Scripture or common sense. Now this is altogether unfortunate, unnecessary, and ought not to be. For divine revelation certainly has endeavored to make it perfectly plain in all its bearings to human reason. And this should suffice.

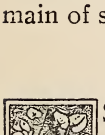
But the trouble at last with man is found in the deplorable fact that he is disposed to indulge too freely in wild notions and extravagant expressions about what God must do with stubborn sinners when he comes to deal with them in the future world. And often to his mind all grades, degrees, and distinctions of sin and punishment are completely blotted out. And so he easily persuades himself that the Lord will be compelled to employ the severest measures in the mildest case of an ordinary sinner to meet, in a moderate way, the demands of relentless justice. With him, it is to all alike consummate ruin and the hottest hell forever. And hence he talks fluently and flippantly about the omnipotent God being fully aroused, thoroughly enraged against the sinner, and determined to wreak eternal vengeance upon him in the inextinguishable fires of his own insatiable wrath. His morbid and excited imagination is filled with the most frightful pictures of the Almighty burning with anger toward a world of ruined sinners. And in this peculiar state of mind he carefully ransacks the whole realm of human language for words and terms of the strongest meaning, and straightway presses them into his service, that he may be able to present in the most graphic and impressive manner the Lord of majesty and glory drawing upon the exhaustless resources of his omniscience that he may devise methods of infinite torture, and exerting his untiring energies to inflict intolerable pain upon the disobedient and offending children of men. And it is strange that it does not occur to him that the faintest movement of such an immense tornado of divine fury as he describes would, in the nature of things, in despite of all oppos-

ing obstructions, sweep an entire universe of helpless transgressors out of existence. Yea, an all-powerful Being so desperately incensed as he depicts him would most likely overthrow the framework of nature, pull down the dome of creation, and leave the whole wreck in a mass of hopeless ruin.

And to remind one holding such extreme views that they are harsh and irrational, and therefore objectionable, is simply to call forth from him other remarks equally as immoderate. For instance, he will not hesitate to tell you that our heavenly Father will impart to lost souls an ever-increasing capacity for suffering that they may endure the surpassing and constantly intensifying agonies of perdition. Now in all such representations, or, to speak more properly, misrepresentations, God is seen by his creatures as if he were taking a grim pleasure in the gloomy failure and disappointment of the works of his own hands. And to a serious, devout mind they look like ugly caricatures upon the unerring wisdom and faultless goodness of a God whose nature and name is Everlasting Love. And so they become painfully shocking to the finer sensibilities of redeemed humanity.

There is good ground for supposing that punishment for sin in the future state of existence will not differ materially from what it is in this life. And that seems to be the most reasonable conclusion that has yet been reached in regard to the matter. Then we may safely accept it as a reliable proposition that the fiercest pangs and bitterest cries of lost souls come from the compunction of a guilty conscience, just as we often witness and sometimes experience in this life, and which occasionally becomes so intense and

unbearable that it drives us into fatal madness, as seen in the case of Judas Iscariot and Lady Macbeth. There are many similar examples. It is that inconceivable remorse which must ever arise from a keen sense of guilt. And it is sure to result in insufferable mental anguish that overwhelms the soul with despair. There is no kind of sorrow comparable to it. It far exceeds all forms of physical torture which can be inflicted upon the body. And from this consideration it follows that the commonly received idea that external agencies of a material character will be employed upon the corporeal nature of man, for the purpose of producing or increasing the sufferings which he is undergoing in the world of woe, must be incorrect. And for that reason it ought to be abandoned. It finds no recognition in the Bible or in the wide domain of sound reason.



S long as men continue to sin against God, they must suffer the severe penalty of violated law. And they had as well make up their minds to accept the situation, hard as it is, or change their course of conduct. The only alternative is submission or suffering.

Sin is the great disturbing element in the divine government. And it must always be attended by sorrow and pain, by death and hell.

When the whole world shall forsake all manner of evil, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with an implicit, fiducial trust, all sorrow and suffering must cease, and perdition can be no more. Then heaven shall reign without a rival. That grand jubilee of the

world's final release from the slavery of sin and salvation to God, which has been promised in prophecy, fervently prayed for, and fondly expected through all the years of the past, may still be far off in the unformed and unwritten annals of the ages yet to be; but it must certainly come. God's infallible word is pledged for it; therefore, it cannot fail. So we wait with perfect patience and joyful resignation its assured arrival.

> Patience and resignation are the pillars
> Of human peace on earth.

PART II.

The Scriptural View of the Subject.

IT is our purpose under this head of the discussion to notice, first, those passages of the Bible that favor the position which we have assumed in the matter, and afterwards those which are thought to be in opposition to it. And we will make it our main object to be clear and concise.

We shall take our proof-texts from the edition of the American Revised Version, and also make our references to it, for we regard it as the purest and best translation of the Holy Scriptures which has yet appeared.

THE ancient Hebrews believed steadfastly in a hereafter for man. Their writers in the Old Testament delivered themselves in no uncertain terms in respect to his survival after death and his existence beyond the grave. So they have left no room for anything like reasonable doubt in this matter. But their notions of rewards and punishments in the future world for the deeds done in the body—if they had any at all—were vague, indefinite, and very misty. The only chastisements of which they make mention, as being visited upon men for their right-doing or wrong-doing, are confined mainly, if not entirely, to this life, and end with it. They do not appear to have anticipated anything special after death.

In their thought all men, whether good or bad, when they passed away from the earth, were collected together in the same place with their ancestors and kindred. Jehovah sent, through Huldah the prophetess, to Josiah, the tender-hearted and good king, saying:

> Therefore, behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.

This message from God to his faithful servant is full of affection and compassion. It promises him that kind friends shall lay his lifeless body away tenderly and with becoming ceremonies in the royal sepulchers at Jerusalem, and assures him that the Lord will himself take charge of the liberated spirit, and leave it rejoicing with loved ones in the happy associations of the great beyond.

Now the name of the place where all the dead are supposed to meet is known in Hebrew as Sheol, which is regarded as being a vast subterranean cavern. It is thus named because it is thought to have been taken originally from a word which means *to dig, to excavate, to hollow out.* And in the Septuagint version it is almost uniformly rendered by the well-known term Hades, meaning the invisible and unknown land; and so in the Greek tongue it has a corresponding import to the Hebrew expression.

And in both languages these significant words are used to denote the unseen world of departed human spirits, which is represented to us as a lonesome land of dense darkness, filled with disorder and confusion, slumbering under heavy clouds in the awful shadows

of death, and under the dominion of an unbroken night of deepest gloom, upon which no moon ever shines, star gleams, or morning breaks.

> Are not my days few? cease then,
> And let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,
> Before I go whence I shall not return,
> Even to the land of darkness and of the shadow of death;
> The land dark as midnight;
> The land of the shadow of death, without any order,
> And where the light is as midnight.

It must be confessed that this is a melancholy description of the home of the soul when dismissed from its frail, dissolving tenement of clay. But it should be borne in mind that it comes from one of the oldest books in existence; and also that it represents the earliest conceptions that came into the untaught minds of men of

> That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
> No traveler returns.

By all means it should be read and considered in connection with that bright and cheerful disclosure which St. John makes to us of that happy realm in which our loved ones are joyously meeting, anxiously waiting, and hopefully watching for our coming to join them in the fair regions of that delightful Beulah land of love and union, where death never comes and parting is no more.

> And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.

We receive this most precious proclamation directly from heaven. It is necessarily divine in its origin

as it could have been conceived by no finite mind. It was, at its deliverance, a simple, oral announcement, intelligently made in the familiar words of human speech, uttered in the entrancing strains of the soft, sweet voice of redeemed humanity. How resplendently shine the saints in glory all clad in the lustrous robes of immortality! And in this instance the beloved disciple was so completely overpowered by the dazzling appearance and bright manifestation of the majestical messenger from Paradise—"the revealed abode of spirits in beatitude"—that he very naturally mistook him for his divine Lord, and was in the act of worshiping him when he was forbidden to do so, as he tells us:

> And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God.

But the heavenly herald, while the sublime enunciation was still lingering with fascinating power upon the enraptured soul of the apocalyptic seer, ordered him to put it in the more permanent form of writing, that it might be preserved and handed down the ages, and so become the common heritage of consolation to all sorrowing men.

And this strong affirmation, brought to us from the veiled land by one of its inhabitants, so positive and comforting in itself, is also clearly confirmed by the Holy Spirit, who assures us that all who die in the Lord enter immediately into a state of conscious and continued rest and happiness. It leads us to believe that they fully understand, properly appreciate, and

constantly enjoy their condition and its beautiful surroundings. It is true that they are not yet crowned in heaven; but they are gathered safely with the grand sacramental hosts of the pure and good of earth into the glorious intermediate state which God has provided for them. There they are no longer troubled with their bodily infirmities, afflictions, and sorrows. Blessed condition, in which

> Flesh and sin no more control
> The sacred pleasures of the soul.

And having died in the Lord, they are with him to stay evermore in his immediate presence. They see the King in his beauty.

And there are other things which contribute largely to the swelling and ever-rising tides of their bliss. They were good and faithful servants in this life; and therefore it is said of them, "for their works follow with them." Not only in sacred memory; however, that is certainly eminently true of them. And if the remembrance of evil performances in this world increases the tortures of the lost in the next, is it not reasonable to suppose that a fond recollection of sacrifices made and righteousness practiced in the service of God in the interests of humanity will enlarge the sphere of the pleasures of the saved, even in the beatifying presence of their divine Lord?

According to this scripture, whatever a man does for the glory of God and the promotion of the good of his race not only contributes to, but really constitutes, his happiness in time and eternity. But everything of value in this line of action is always the direct production and result of a living, constant, and active faith in God. And this valuable quotation further

suggests to our minds the pleasing thought that our sainted ones, in their new and changed relations and associations, have not lost sight of us, whom they have left for a while, weeping in our desolation, weighed down with the cares and burdens of life; but that they do still feel an abiding interest in our welfare, and ever stand in readiness to afford us all the assistance at their command, that we may successfully "fight the good fight of the faith," and "lay hold on the life eternal."

OW as to what the place itself into which our friends and loved ones have entered may have to do with their beatified condition in bringing it about, is indeed a question which calls for our most serious consideration. It is true that we have already turned our attention, in a measure, to this matter in the first part of this discussion. But there our object was simply to show that natural reason and common sense intimate to us that it is the state of mind that one is in that produces real happiness or wretchedness. And now we come to make the contention that it is also in perfect agreement with the teaching of the Bible; and, in fact, that it is the only doctrine which is held by that Book in connection with the interesting inquiry.

There are many who seem to think that it is the place with its correspondents which creates their bliss or makes their misery. And hence they are ever ready to remind us of the fact that the righteous are spoken of as being placed in Paradise, which is looked upon as a beautiful garden of ecstatic delight. They

pitch their tents on celestial plains and camp on heavenly ground. The land is fair, bright, and serene.

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

They also tell us that the wicked are represented as being driven away into Tartarus, which is described as a place of darkness and distress.

No sun e'er gilds the gloomy horrors there;
No cheerful gales refresh the lazy air.

And our Lord himself alludes to these diverse divisions and allotments in the ample regions of Hades when he promised the penitent and believing thief upon the cross that he should be with him that day in Paradise. But following the plain teaching of divine revelation throughout, in respect to this subject, we are drawn to the conclusion that the condition creates the place, and not the place the condition. And the words of Jesus in this instance clearly imply this.

The other malefactor, who was being crucified at the same time, remained unyielding, impenitent, and unbelieving. So he must have died unforgiven. And with all his flagrant crimes blushing upon him, he also passed along with his praying, trusting, pardoned companion into Hades. But that unseen world of disembodied spirits must have been as gloomy to him as it was glorious to his former friend and associate in the daring, terrible, defiant wickedness of this life, who had just been saved by confiding in the precious, purifying blood of the slain Victim of Calvary, and was

allowed the privilege of going on with his Saviour into the happiness of heaven, as the first trophy of the crucifixion. It was the difference in the moral states of the men that made Hades Paradise to one and Tartarus to the other. And thus it was that the two robbers, one justified and saved, the other condemned and lost, must have entered the dominions of the dead together.

> The social shades the same dark journey go
> And join each other in the realms below.

There they may dwell together, mixing and mingling with each other as they were wont to do while in this world, without regard to their moral distinctions. This is not a mere theory. It is a revealed fact, based on the direct disclosures of the word of God.

Suppose we read carefully and weigh well that marvelous narration of the last interview which Saul, the fallen king of Israel, had with Samuel, the faithful prophet of Jehovah, in this life. When the astonished witch of Endor had, unexpectedly to herself, called from the silent habitations of Sheol the serene and pensive apparition of the good man, he administered a severe but deserved rebuke to the apostate monarch for his willful disobedience and inexcusable alienation from the Lord; then proceeded to announce to him his rapidly approaching fate, and briefly closed the startling deliverance with the following unwelcome declaration:

> And to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.

This awful prediction of the revoked and disquieted prophet was literally fulfilled in every particular, according to the history which we have of the case.

For the next day the contending forces came together in fatal clash of arms. And so it was, Saul and his sons, while fighting bravely and fiercely, went down at last upon the bloody heights of Mount Gilboa. Together they passed away from the sinking ranks of the raging battle into the spacious regions of Sheol, that general receptacle of all disembodied human souls, whether great or small, good or bad, old or young, saved or lost.

Now think of the reckless, daring, idolatrous, and abandoned Saul, with the pure, pious, noble, chivalric, and intrepid Jonathan, and his other two but less renowned sons, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, all of them with holy Samuel in the vast realm of the dead, in which all the past generations of men have been promiscuously and indiscriminately collected from the gone-by ages.

But does not our Lord teach, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that the two departments of Hades are distinct and wholly separated from each other? Well, let us examine what he says about it:

> And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

A little cool, deliberate, and dispassionate reflection ought to satisfy any one that the significant expression, "afar off," cannot in this special instance be applied to material space in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Here it is used simply to designate spiritual association. And we find Moses employs a similar phrase in the same sense. Thus we see the unity of design in Inspiration which pervades the whole system of revelation. When Abraham was walking along in the way with the Lord, and convers-

ing with him about the imminent destruction of the cities of the Plain, the impending doom of which had just been revealed to him, he determined at once to intercede for them with prayer and supplication; and it is said of him that he "drew near." Certainly it does not mean a physical approach. Clearly it denotes a close, conscious, spiritual contact.

And in the case of the rich man and Lazarus, we are plainly informed of the fact that they are near enough to look readily into each other's faces, easily recognize one another, and converse familiarly together. We see and hear them in close conversation. But it may be asked, How about the yawning chasm which disconnects and severs them? There is no doubt about the chasm. It is most certainly there.

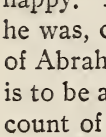
> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.

This is strong symbolic speech. But it is none the less true and reliable for that. And the very same gulf exists between good and bad men in this life. And it sunders them as effectually here as is does there. And it can never be crossed over. But it can be closed up; and by that means it can be removed entirely out of the way. This can be readily accomplished by bringing about a change in character. Then it follows that the solitary possibility of establishing anything like spiritual union or communion between righteous and sinful men is by effecting a radical change of character in the one or the other party. And in no other way can they be brought together, either in this life or beyond the grave. They can never bridge over or leap across the chasm. The

only chance is to close it up, which can be easily done by a change of character. There is no very serious difficulty in changing one's character, and by that means closing up the impassable gulf.

And this is clearly what Jesus intends to teach in this part of the parable. For his language applies with equal force and propriety to persons in this life and that which follows after death. All men in this world who, by penitency and faith, have earnestly sought God and found him in the pardon of their sins, may truthfully adopt apostolic language, and say, "We have passed out of death into life." In reality they have come out of hell into heaven. To "turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God," is a divine form of human speech, which contains the identical thought, and describes the very same process. Truly it is coming out of perdition and from under the dominion of Satan, into the kingdom of God and the fullness of his salvation. It requires this deep, thorough change in the character of the sinner to bring about the radical change in his condition. Nothing less will suffice, and nothing more is necessary to accomplish it, at any time or anywhere. For instance, what would it avail if you could exchange places between the rich man and Lazarus, without a corresponding change in their character? What could come out of it one way or another? Suppose it were possible for them to swap places. Could that alleviate the pain of the one or diminish the joy of the other? The rich man, without a perfect change of character, would continue to be tormented just as much if he were in the bosom of Abraham as where he is. And the happiness of Laz-

arus, while he maintains his integrity to God, would remain as full and complete as it is now, if he were put in the rich man's place. Nothing but an entire change of character can reverse the destinies of good or bad men in time or eternity. And another strong and convincing evidence of this fundamental truth, in addition to that which has already been given, may be found in the obvious fact that Abraham's bosom and Paradise mean precisely the same thing in the Scriptures. And we all know that simply reclining on Abraham's bosom cannot, in itself, make any man happy. But to be pure and holy in heart and life, as he was, can and will do it. Then to be in the bosom of Abraham, in the New Testament sense of the term, is to be associated with the grand old patriarch on account of congeniality of soul and harmony of character. This makes Paradise; but nothing else can do it.



OW these strange susceptibilities of man for happiness or misery, his absolute capability of changing his manner of life at will, and his interminable responsibility for the use or abuse of these truly wonderful endowments, place before us one of the most profoundly interesting and instructive of all the great problems which have been submitted to the mind of man for investigation.

> Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
> The proper study of mankind is man.

Then suppose we examine him in connection with the sacred Scriptures. Science is in total ignorance of this question and can give us no information whatever about it. The Bible account of his origin,

which is the only reliable one we have of the matter, is short, but altogether satisfactory. Here it is:

> And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Hence we have in man a compound and complex structure. He is a monogenetic being. That is to say, he is a unity, or only one in his personality, and the sole representative of his race or kind. All the multitudinous tribes and tongues of men, of every clime or color, sprang originally from the same primitive stock which is here spoken of. And this is what St. Paul thought and taught:

> And he (Jehovah God) made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation.

In his essence man is a duality, or a twofold something. He strangely combines matter and spirit in his mysterious make-up. And the bringing together and uniting these two different substances in the person of man resulted in the production of another distinct element in him, which is significantly denominated the soul.

Then man is a unity in his personality, as he is the only individual of his order in creation; he is a duality in his substance, as he is made of matter and spirit; and he is a trinity in his nature, as he has body, spirit, and soul. Thus inspiration has presented him to us tripartitely, and we deal with him accordingly.

Now according to this fully confident scriptural assertion the entire human race, in all its widely different variety of color and wonderful adaptation and wise assignment to climatic locations and influences, came from the very same parentage.

And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground.

ERE our attention is called particularly to the production of the body of man. It consists of many bones of different sizes, lengths, shapes, and uses. They are all strong, smooth, and as white as ivory. Some of them are round, some are flattened, some are fluted, some are straight, and others are curved. But all of them are skillfully turned, suitably fitted together, and wisely adjusted to their various places, so as properly to constitute the substantial framework of the human body. They make a durable and safe support for it.

Then there are the membranes, cartilages, ligaments, and muscles, which are very strong and tough. They are so arranged and disposed of as to hold the different parts of the structure firmly and securely together. And at the same time they give strength to all of the members and allow perfect freedom of action to the limbs.

Next is the abundant supply of flesh which imparts to it roundness, fullness, comeliness, and exquisite beauty of form, and makes it God's beau ideal of physical perfection.

And there are the numerous blood vessels, arteries, veins, and capillaries for carrying on the wonderful circulation of the crimson tide of life, running through every part of it.

We also have the immense expansion of that most marvelous network of mysteriously delicate and refined nerves, which is admirably distributed and ingeniously spread out over the entire surface of the body, and which is the seat of sensation itself.

Finally, we have the pretty, smooth, soft, silken

skin, perforated with millions of very small pores or minute openings which are so diminutive that they are invisible to the naked eye. And it serves as an elegant veil or covering for the whole physical man.

And within the trunk and head we find securely inclosed and strongly protected the subtile, vital, and miraculous organs of circulation, respiration, digestion, and reasoning.

Well may we all adopt the appropriate words of the devout psalmist, and exclaim with him:

I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

F rendered literally according to the Hebrew, it would read *"breath of lives,"* thus denoting the animal, intellectual, and religious lives in the man. We are strongly of the opinion that such is the thought which Inspiration desires to convey to us in this particular instance. And we think that the best evidence of the reliability of this position is contained in the fact that it is in perfect harmony with the experience and observation of men in regard to these matters. We are perfectly conscious of the threefold life in ourselves and behold the same in others.

But we are called upon here to consider the spirit of man as distinct from his body and soul. We find that it is neither a formation nor a creation. It is an inspiration. It is that life-imparting and life-sustaining breath of Jehovah God himself which quickens the spirit of man, animates his soul, and gives vitality to his body.

Man is a very peculiar creature. As regards his substances, he is both earth-born and also heaven-born. He gets his "well-wrought body" from "the dust of the ground," but receives his deathless spirit from the divine breath of Jehovah God. So in referring to the origin of his corporeal nature, he may correctly speak of "mother earth"; but when he means the source from which he obtained his spiritual nature, he must call God his "Father." And in this respect all men may confidently affirm:

The Spirit of God is in my nostrils.
There is a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

This is the highest, the sublimest, and the most wonderful nature in man. And it entitles him to indubitable kinship with the eternal and infinite Spirit.

And man became a living soul.

HIS curious and inscrutable something is neither a formation, a creation, nor an inspiration. It was not made for him, nor was it breathed into him. But it appears to be a resultant, which was brought about somehow by the incomprehensible combination of gross matter with the breath of the Lord. It is the effluence which flowed from the inflation of the breath of Jehovah God, which passed into the nostrils of man, and so came into contact with and took hold upon his physical nature as to form the essential and vital connection between his perishable body and immortal spirit, in consequence of which he became a living, acting, talking, responsible being.

FROM this particular standpoint we may be able, in a measure at least, to untangle intelligently the involved and intricate history of man in his association with the government of God *over* him and *in* him. His body having been taken from the dust of the ground, perhaps from the bright, ruddy, fresh virgin soil of Eden, he finds himself sorely and dangerously complicated with the affairs of this world. And it could not well be otherwise with him, as he is so closely and intimately related to the earth. In many ways he is dependent upon it. He has to look to it for his support, comfort, and pleasure. He even gets his impressions and sensations of life from it, through the organs of the body. These, having taken them up from the outer world about him, pass them along the nerves up to the brain, where the soul takes charge of them, manipulates them into order, and weaves them into trains of thought and reasoning. And hence he is able to hold converse with his fellow-man and communication with his God. And his spirit was breathed into his body from the mouth of Jehovah God; he is very nearly related to him. And for this very reason he is brought into eternal contact and essential communion with him, not only as his Creator, but more especially as his Father. Therefore, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews emphatically calls him "the Father of spirits." And St. Paul, when preaching to the Athenians "in the midst of the Areopagus," concerning the same great truth, said, "For we are also his offspring." The classic apostle refers to Aratus and Kleanthes, Greek poets, and stamps the quotation with divine authority.

LL of man's religious principles are in his spirit; all of his intellectual powers are in his soul; and all of his carnal appetites are in his body. And right here we find those vile and violent passions which St. Peter characterizes as "fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

And it is here in this region that we meet with the possibilities and dangers of many of the most common and debasing sins of mankind. The evil approaches to the soul are frequently found in the body.

And St. James describes in a formal and definite way the course which sin usually takes in a man:

> Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death.

According to this explanation given by the apostle, the sinful act of disobedience of which he speaks commences in the innocent desires of the bodily appetites, halts in the reasoning faculties of the soul, and waits there for the final decision of the will. And if that should be given adversely, all is safe; but if it be determined favorably to the temptation, as soon as the wicked deed is done the stroke of death drops upon the spirit and it dies. Sin kills the spirit immediately.

And on the other hand, the work of salvation can start nowhere else but in the spirit. The Holy Spirit quickens the spirit of man by awakening his slumbering conscience, which is the supreme faculty of the spirit, and then rushes straightway into the soul, and

acting under the divine impulse impresses it with a sense of its guilt and danger and arouses it to serious, contrite thought about its unhappy condition, and anxiously expects the ultimate decision of the will, which must be given before spiritual life can be brought back to the sinful man. We offer the following scriptures in support of these views:

> It is the Spirit that giveth life.
> That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

It is here plainly and expressly taught that the Spirit of God is the only life-imparting principle, and also that the spirit of man is the only life-receiving principle. The Holy Spirit is the only power that can revivify the dead spirit in man and make it live again. And the only thing in man that is capable of being animated through the agency of the Holy Spirit is the spirit in him, which is itself divine.

Nothing could be surer than that without the illuminating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit upon the spirit of man he could not know, recognize, or appreciate God. He would remain as utterly ignorant of all spiritual and eternal things as the lower animal creation around him. Hence St. Paul says:

> Now the natural (Greek *psychical,* or English *soulical*) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged (Greek, *examined*).

The apostle opens a wide and fearful gap here between the spiritual man, in whom the Spirit of God reigns and rules supreme in all things—lifting his aspirations to heaven and centering his desires in God—and the natural man, whose soul and body alone are alive and active.

But in such a man the mental faculties and intellectual powers are completely overridden and downtrodden by the carnal appetites and passions, while the spiritual, which is his best and highest nature, and is that which brings him into relationship with God and imperishable things, is dead. And hence his total ignorance of, and stolid indifference toward, God, all heavenly things, and spiritual attainments.

No man, even with the most capacious mind, endowed with the richest gifts and shining talents, and favored with the highest and most thorough culture, can, by searching, find out God. For he is not to be apprehended by any process of learning, human reasoning, or comprehended by a simple intellectual grasp. To a man of this sort, the relation or rehearsal of a religious experience would be entirely unmeaning, or highly mythical, all the way through it, from the bitterness of repentance to the transporting joys of regeneration. He would neither understand nor appreciate it. These things are spiritually examined and discerned.

But while all this, and much more, is true in regard to the sad condition of the natural or soulical man, it is equally true at the same time that the most ordinary and illiterate man can, by a simple act of faith, which is done by a spiritual effort, become so well and fully acquainted with God as to know him perfectly and satisfactorily in the free remission of all his sins and the complete renewal of his nature.

All that any man is required to do in order that he may become conscious of the fact that God is his tender, loving Father, is to submit himself unconditionally to him, and consent unreservedly to be saved

through his eternal Son. Let him do this, and then the Holy Spirit will regenerate his spirit, purify his soul, and sanctify his body, so that in answer to the apostolic prayer the whole man, in every part, will "be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

OW the discrimination which we have been maintaining and emphasizing between the soul and spirit of man is not a chimerical distinction, nor is it an arbitrary division; but it is real, essential, and vital. The trichotomous nature of man is the doctrine of inspiration, and prevails throughout the Bible. Dichotomy is the teaching of science and human philosophy. And it is true only when applied to him in respect to the two substances of which he is composed. But trichotomy relates particularly to the three factors or natures which he combines in himself. And as we have already seen, it is clearly set forth and divinely declared in connection with the formation of man. Really it antedates his actual construction. And it had its origin in the secret deliberations of the deep and impenetrable counsels of the persons of the Godhead in conference with each other.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Image and likeness are not used as synonymous terms. They are different words, and are not intended to mean the same thing. "Image" belongs to the soul, and "likeness" applies to the spirit. The one is fixed, the other is progressive.

The magnificent intellectual endowments of the soul of man in some sort and some sense are an abridgment of the attributes of the Godhead. With all of their necessary limitations and restrictions, they bear a strong resemblance and striking correspondence to the infinite perfections of their divine Author, the Creator of all things.

But it is the spirit of man which enables him to become more and more like God, and to approach closer and closer to him forever. And it is this preëminent property in his most intricately combined natures which perpetually ennobles all his other faculties, powers, and principles.

The virgin Mary, in the sublime Magnificat, observes, in the most impressive manner, this necessary and notable difference between the soul and the spirit:

> My soul doth magnify the Lord,
> And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

The peculiar form of this expression is by no means accidental. It evidently is the work of inspiration. The unaided human mind would never have thought of it.

It rightfully belongs to the province of the soul to magnify the Lord. In a grand intellectual way, it can discover and decipher the wonders of the universe. It can, with ever-expanding admiration, revel and rejoice in the grandeur and glory of all the mighty works of the Lord, as they are manifested in the vastness and majesty of the physical creation. But there the matter is obliged to come to an end. The soul can reach no further nor rise any higher. It has gone to the utmost of its capacity. And here it must stop.

The Spirit, however, is so indued with divine abili-

ties and furnished with infinite competencies that it can, in harmony with the original designs and purposes of Him who intrusted man with it, always rejoice in a blissful consciousness of the abiding and pervading presence of Jehovah God within it, attended by uninterrupted and interminable communion with him in all the fullness of complete salvation. And hence it seeks and strives through the influence of the Holy Spirit to maintain, without disturbance or intermission, its indispensable connection with heaven, and so evermore enlarge its sphere of usefulness and increase its happiness.

But the soul is situated differently. It is brought into unbroken contact and very perilous relations with the world through the body. And it is so constituted that it is constantly intoxicated with the dangerous attractions, deceptions, and allurements of this life. It is generally found busily toiling and struggling to secure food, raiment, wealth, and whatever else that can in any way imaginable contribute to its comfort, pleasure, luxury, pride, or personal aggrandizement. Out of these unfortunate matters arises directly that fierce and fearful conflict which is going on between the soul and body of every man who earnestly desires to be good and honestly endeavors to do right, which is so accurately and graphically described by St. Paul:

> For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice.

What a deplorable dilemma to be in! And yet, with all its inconceivable embarrassment and mortification, it enters largely into the experience of all men

who are sincerely striving to be pure and righteous. And owing to the close, intimate, tender, and sympathetic union which naturally exists between them, the influence of the body upon the soul must, under all circumstances, be tremendous; and at certain times it becomes almost irresistible. The body is made dependent upon the productions of the earth for its subsistence, comfort, and enjoyment. And this state of things opens up a fruitful source of many dangers and grievous troubles to the soul. For it must assist the body in which it is sojourning by planning, scheming, and managing for it, so that it may be successful in obtaining these things in sufficient quantities to answer its necessary demands. And it will require no small amount to do this. Much is absolutely essential to its very existence. We are told, by those who claim to know, that an ordinary man will consume eight hundred pounds of solid food and drink fifteen hundred pounds of liquids in the run of a single year. What a revelation! It is perfectly astounding! Only think of the vast contributions which the earth, water, and air must needs make to keep a man alive and render him comfortable for only a few months. And he cannot survive long without these favors. He must have them. And the helpless body cannot obtain them without the assistance of the dependent soul. In these matters the soul must suggest the method for acquisition before the body can execute in any direction. They are close partners in business.

Now all wise and honest means which may be employed to get possession of such goods as are found to be really necessary are altogether worthy, right, and

proper. But what shall we say of the wicked chicanery resorted to and the enormous expenditures that are foolishly wasted upon wanton luxuries and vicious modes of living, with the cries of the dying poor ringing in our ears, while their suffering forms are sinking slowly out of our sight to release and rest? Ah! just here is where the great and incalculable criminality comes into the account.

Then, after all, this frightful and unhappy contention, mentioned by the apostle as going on between soul and body, is not so much a matter of wonder. We might reasonably expect it under all the conditions. And it ought not to be a matter of great surprise to us if the infatuated soul should often turn a deaf ear to the earnest and urgent appeals of the anxious spirit made in behalf of a higher, purer, and better life, and should suffer itself drawn away by the voluptuous body to the low and debasing things of the earth.

Man has but one sure course for salvation and glorification in heaven left open to him; and that is the defeat and complete subjugation of the body. And St. Paul clearly sets forth and fully illustrates this idea in his own case, as related by himself:

> But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.

Now the main fact in this important reference, to which we would call special attention, is that the great preacher of the Gentiles represents himself in it as being engaged in a violent and deadly conflict with his body. Evidently it was or had been giving him considerable worry and much trouble through its per-

verted appetites and depraved passions. And this unpleasant arrangement of things brought about a state of affairs within him which he significantly describes as a regular pugilistic engagement that must go on to "a finish." And, therefore, we hear him saying, "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage." The "I," that is to say, the soul, which is the real man, St. Paul here most appropriately recognizes as himself. And it is this same something in man, this intermediate nature, which invests him with distinct personality and renders him individually responsible for his motives, thoughts, words, and actions. It is worthy of note that we always find this struggle going on between the soul and body in connection with matters of morality and religion. And it is obvious that it must come about somehow in this way: the spirit, the soul's supernal companion, being directed and moved thereunto by the Holy Spirit, presses upon its attention the supreme fact that it is designed for a higher and more honorable destiny than serving the body in its low, degrading, and polluting ways. Then the contumacious combat begins in good earnest. And it rages on, waxing hotter and hotter, until it reaches a culmination point of severity in which he finds it necessary for him to pound the obstreperous body even unto discoloration. He deals hard and well-directed blows upon it, one after another, until at last it is beaten and bruised "*black* and *blue*." And when he has overcome it, he reduces it to bondage, and sinks it into a state of abject slavery. And then, to be sure of winning for himself an imperishable crown of life, he must keep it in perfect subjection with an unyielding purpose and sleepless vigilance. He must not give it any

chance to regain its freedom, lest it should walk forth defiantly and reassert its rebellion against him.

And the soul, having thus conquered the body, must then willingly, of its own accord, submit itself to the spirit. For without such a thorough and voluntary submission of itself to the spirit, it can never be completely happy. For the spirit is dependent upon the concerted action of the soul with itself for the realization of their higher aims, and the accomplishment of their sublimest purposes in all lines of holy living and useful undertaking. Why, the spirit is not able to rise in devotion and praise to God without the full and free consent of the soul. The truth is, the destiny of the entire man, for both time and eternity, must rest, with all its grand or gloomy results, upon the independent determination of the soul. And while our Lord does not undertake to locate definitely or authoritatively the will power in man, he never fails to recognize it as the supreme force in him. He uniformly ascribes to its exercise the final settlement of his choice in all matters, whether good or evil. And this is a satisfactory reason for the fact that he never fails to make his appeals and submit his propositions to men upon the presumption that they are perfectly free to accept or reject them, just precisely as they may see fit to decide for themselves, in despite of all outward circumstances and influences:

> And he said unto all, If any man would come after me (Greek, *If any man will to come after me*), let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

We notice with profound interest that the first thing which a man is required to do, according to this saying of our Lord, in order that he may become his fol-

lower or disciple, is to decide the matter for himself by an untrammeled act of his own volition. And he cannot comply with the urgent and inflexible demand of Jesus without performing this initiative requisition first. And no compulsory force whatever can be brought to bear upon him in making this transcendent choice. The Almighty cannot himself afford to coerce or drive him in this tremendous transaction. It must come directly and spontaneously from the man himself.

But under the predominating influence and consent of the will, self-denying and cross-bearing both alike become a religious pleasure as well as a bounden duty. And on another occasion Jesus expresses the very same sentiments concerning this amazing will power in man:

> If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.

In this quotation, as in the preceding one, the important matter which is settled is the prominent fact that stands supreme over all others, that man has the constitutional and inalienable right of deciding for himself, separate and apart from, and independent of, all other agencies and influences. It is for him to say whether he *will* or *will not* do the will of God. If he should choose to do it, no power in the world could prevent him from accomplishing it. And on the other hand, if he should decide not to do it, no power, not even the combined forces of the universe, could constrain him to do it or drag him into it against his own volition. Such is the marvelous power of the human will. In its astounding and unrestrained freedom of

choice and action, it successfully and effectually resists the mighty influences of omnipotent power. God does not undertake to control it by force. And when this dominant faculty of the soul of man, which has been divinely appointed to decide upon, regulate, and preside over the emotions, words, and deeds of men, has once fully determined to perform the will of God, in the very act of so doing there comes to his consciousness as by a supernatural revelation a sure and unmistakable knowledge of the true nature and real character of the teaching of Christ Jesus, as to whether it is from the Father or not. In this particular instance, it is made inspired truth's infallible test.

And to invest man with this Godlike attribute is to make him individually, solitarily, and perpetually responsible for his doings and doom. And to deprive him of it would not only wreck his accountability, but it would also obliterate his capacity for enjoying pleasure or suffering pain on account of his actions. Yea, it would destroy his competency for appreciating rewards for his virtues or realizing retributions for his vices. But it is his indisputable claim upon, indubitable right to, and incontestable possession of it which makes

Man an Eternal Probationer.

And that is just what he is. And, therefore, we hold that his destiny can never be unconditionally fixed, either in the swift flight of the years of this life or in the long sweep of eternal ages. However, there may, and certainly will, come up in the slowly advancing eras of the interminable future a bright and glorious period in the unfolding history of the redeemed and glorified in heaven, when they will have so firmly established

themselves in the love of holiness and practice of righteousness as to so weaken the probabilities and chances for disaffection and disobedience toward Jehovah God as completely to banish from the realm of the uncertain the dangers of anything like relapse or apostasy to them.

But still it remains true that the security and continuation of the happiness of the saved in glory must forever depend upon their own faithfulness to their Creator, Redeemer, and Saviour *willingly* and *cheerfully* rendered.

ND as probation has been extended to man with one special object in view, to wit, the salvation of not simply a few, but the entire race, from sin, it would follow that it must be prolonged to him till the last lost soul is recovered from death and hell and restored to, and confirmed in, everlasting life and happiness.

But is this the doctrine of the Bible? If it is, we may safely accept it; and if it is not, we must reject it. In reading that precious old Book, we meet with a great many selections in which it is clearly implied and from which it is fairly inferred. And we may with pleasure and profit examine some of these. We cull almost at random.

And they indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing: but he, because he abideth forever, hath his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

The priesthood of our Lord is entirely unique. The sacred office did not come to him by inheritance through a long line of distinguished ancestry. The tribe from which he descended was royal, but not pontifical. He came out of Judah, and not out of Levi. And for this reason he did not enter into his priesthood in the ordinary way, or by using the established means under the ceremonial law. Such a thing would not have been at all suitable in his case.

For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests. And what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

Then it is clear from this that our Lord's baptism could have had no connection in any way with his priesthood. It sustained no relation to it in any sense whatever; nor did it have any reference to it. The simple historical fact, that the Levites entered upon their official duties and performances at the age of about thirty years through certain ritualistic ablutions and purifications by water, has not the remotest bearing or the slightest influence upon the baptism of Jesus. He was neither consecrated and set apart for, nor inducted and installed into, his priesthood by his baptism. If such had been the case with him, he would have been made a priest just as all of his predecessors were before him—"after the law of a carnal commandment," but not "after the power of an endless life." No; his baptism had altogether another and very different object in view. It was performed by John, according to his testimony, for a distinct and plainly

designated purpose. It was, if he properly understood and correctly stated its design, simply intended to point Christ out to him, just as he was entering upon the threshold of his public ministry, as the promised and expected Messiah by an unmistakable token or infallible sign, which was to accompany the solemnization of the sacred ceremony, or to follow immediately upon it.

And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water. And John bear witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit. And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

So Jesus was designated and recognized as being "the Son of God" by his baptism, with the supernatural phenomena which accompanied it. But the language itself is too clear to call for further comment from us. Its meaning is patent to the most casual reader.

Then again, Jesus was not like other priests who had preceded him, and were constituted such under the law according to the Aaronical customs and appointed methods, for he could not be a priest and remain on earth. This fact is full of meaning. It gives us to understand that in his priesthood he is wholly out of the order of earthly priests.

Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law.

Thus it is made plain to us that he was obliged to pass up into heaven that he might be a priest and exercise the peculiar functions of his high office. But up there he holds and fills forever an unchanging priesthood for us. And he is the very priest that we need. None other could fill his place. He was made "perfect through sufferings," "in all points tempted like as we are," "obtained eternal redemption" for us, and is therefore in deep, tender, and perpetual sympathy with us in all of our imperfections, infirmities, sorrows, and sufferings.

And then, above all else, "he is able to save to the uttermost"—*to the consummate end*—"them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

So we see that the great undertaking to save all men runs through all the years of time, and may also extend far out into the bewildering ages of eternity for its *final* and *full* accomplishment. It must be clear to every thoughtful mind that these weighty matters are not treated of here or elsewhere in the Holy Scriptures as belonging alone to this life. They are carefully and intentionally presented to us as continuing with all their incalculable advantages, influences, and benefits, on indefinitely through the dateless periods of the "forever and ever."

And they show conclusively that man's day of probationary trial does not close with this brief life. If it were true that it terminates at death, as many think, then after the general resurrection and judgment of the last day our Great High Priest would lift the dazzling miter from his majestic brow and remove the glittering sacerdotal robe from his glorified person,

and, placing them upon the obsolete altar, cease to plead for sinners or grant pardon to penitents. But nothing of this kind is mentioned. It is not so much as hinted at. But on the contrary, it is positively affirmed that "he ever liveth to make intercession for them," and that he is "a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. By myself have I sworn, the word is gone forth from my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

HE rich, exuberant, boundless, and free grace of God to forgive and save sinners—all sinners everywhere and throughout all the ages—flows in full, fresh, eternal, life-imparting tides through the happily chosen and well-selected language of this prophetical invitation. It comes from the compassionate heart of our heavenly Father. And it is world-wide in its extent and application, sweeping from the center far out to the ever-widening circle of human wants and woes, touching it efficiently at every point, reaching with unwasting force the most distant boundaries of this poor, sinful earth, and lifting the divers population of those remote regions from the profoundest depths of the foulest pollution up to the most exalted heights of the fairest purity. And the Almighty pledges his supremacy of power, holiness, and truth for its successful accomplishment. He binds himself with a solemn oath faithfully to carry out his original purpose, as expressed by him in the

evangelistic call, to save all men, even to the utmost limitations of the world. And to this end he declares that he has sent forth his word from his mouth in righteousness, with the infallible assurance that it shall not return, but shall continue to sound the message of love and hope down the ages, until all created intelligences, having heard and received it, shall humbly and devoutly bow themselves down together before his sovereign throne of mercy, and, as happy, willing, shouting suppliants, swear eternal allegiance to him and his divine government.

I will tell of the decree:
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my Son;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

HEN Jesus of Nazareth arose from among the dead, and came forth out of their silent ranks, leaving the sepulcher stripped of the heavy clouds of gloom which the weeping centuries of the past had spread over it, and flooded with the cheerful light of immortality, then the expanding skies of all worlds began to grow redolent and strangely bright with the crimson glory of the cross, and to glow with the kindling splendors of the eternal triumph of his vicarious death. And the excited angels, awe-struck with the fadeless scenes of the crucifixion, dropped from the loftiest heights of heaven down to "these low grounds of sin and sorrow" and sat with folded wing and bowed head, in the intense brightness of the lingering majesty with which

the mighty Conqueror had filled the vacated tomb, completely absorbed in their deep contemplation of the infinite significance of the resurrection unto life. And the everlasting Father, with the overflowing pleasure of perfect love for his "only begotten Son," and boundless approval upon his redeeming work, with the choral anthems of heaven pealing forth in uncontrollable joy, bade him publish the divine decree abroad with all of its grand unfoldings, which must eventuate in his universal and absolute dominion over all the nations of the earth, in their different tribes and tongues, as they are scattered broadcast from the hill of Calvary out to the most distant borders of the globe. Here we find the wide basis of the great commission which our Lord gave to his apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. And according to his own appointment, made by himself before his passion, they met him promptly upon the consecrated heights of some unknown mountain in Galilee, and received from him their marching orders. They seem to have come together at the chosen place somewhat in advance of their Lord, and were waiting for his arrival:

> And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

At one point the translation of our Lord's language here is somewhat unfortunate. It not only weakens its force, but it actually limits it in its meaning and ap-

plication. If it were rendered literally and correctly, as demanded by the original Greek text, it would read and be read *"make all the nations disciples."* As spoken by Jesus, it secures the final conversion of all the peoples of the whole human race to the Christian religion. But as it stands in the quotation, it anticipates failure, and allows indefinitely for it, in attempting to carry out the Saviour's command. His words are absolutely universal in their import. Let us fear to put anything like restrictions upon them as he delivered them to his disciples. And his promised presence with them, even unto the consummation of the age, is his infallible pledge to them for the ultimate success of their work.

It is evidently presupposed in the paternal promise which was given to the Messiah, as stated in the Psalm, that he will, in his intercessory prayer for the salvation of all men, be certain to ask for these things; and hence it is affirmed that as he makes the request so this large patrimony and extensive possession must be unconditionally handed over to him.

The world then must be considered as belonging to the Son of God by sacred covenant bond. And in due time he will assert his right to unlimited dominion over it, and will reign over it as its gracious Sovereign forever.

And while there is no settled time agreed upon, or specified date furnished, in the precious promise for its fulfillment, yet its final accomplishment, in the unknown epochs of the endless future, is as certain as that the Father now rules in heaven and the Son pleads for sinners.

UT there are so many passages of Scripture from which the doctrine which we are vindicating may be clearly and strongly deduced, that to quote them all would be to transcribe a very large portion of the inspired writings, and would of themselves fill a large volume; so we are inclined to turn our attention to the examination of another class of texts, in which it is taught directly and positively. And we have selected only a few of these from many.

Now is the judgment (Greek, *crisis*) of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.

The passion of Jesus of Galilee is the grandest and most momentous of all the great crises which have occurred in this world's "eventful history." Upon the torn and shattered summit of Golgotha, with the darkened heavens overshadowing him, and all nature shuddering throughout her vast dominions from highest height to deepest foundation, as if she were in suffering sympathy with her expiring Creator in his tragical death, he uncrowned the proud, despotic prince of darkness, unsettled his formidable kingdom of wickedness and woe from top to bottom, and cast him out as a false, treacherous, cruel usurper. And from that auspicious day down to the present propitious hour, he has been operating in the various forms and phases of evil among the offending children of men as a defeated and conquered foe.

And although at one time the terrible death of our blessed Lord did look very much as if it might prove to be an unfortunate failure to him, yet in reality it was all the while a complete success. He suddenly dashed

into the beaming light of a glorious victory from what appeared to be the gathering gloom of an unhappy overthrow. In this mightiest of all struggles, which draped the sun in the black habiliments of signal mourning, startled the earth with violent commotions that rent her rocks asunder and aroused her dead from their dreamless slumber in the grave, shook the world upon its solid basis, and convulsed the whole universe with shocks from Mount Calvary, nothing like disaster or discomfiture could come to the great Captain of our salvation. But then it was that he forever vanquished the dusky legions of hell, put them to flight, and delivered the race of mankind from the fearful apprehension of death in all its frightful forms and manifestations.

Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

And here we have the unmistakable fulfillment of that first prophetic promise which was given to cheer the life and brighten the prospects of the guilty pair immediately after their mournful lapse into disobedience and sin, and merciful expulsion from their ruined Eden-home into a wild wilderness world of want, toil, suffering, and death.

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Truly the seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head. For in his death Jesus crushed him—broke

his power forever, and rescued the human race from the thralldom of sin and death.

And so the painful cross, which was simply designed to be the instrument of his torture, death, and shame, has become the symbol of salvation and spiritual life to all men everywhere. It has also become the common center of moral attraction to the whole universe.

The crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of the divine Son of Mary are all embraced in the profound meaning of the suggestive expression, "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth"—rather, according to the Greek, it should be, *out of the earth.*

His death and burial were obliged to be followed by his resurrection, ascension, and coronation, in order that he might carry out successfully the only object of his mission to this most wicked and wretched world of ours, which, as he here positively affirms, is "to draw all to himself." There is no word in the Greek of the original text corresponding to the term "men" which we find in the translation.

Then we are not at liberty to place any limitation whatever upon the all-comprehending expression of our Lord. But we are left free to adopt the only natural inference, that Jesus has, in his redeeming work, not only broken down the destructive power and influence of "the prince of this world," and secured the happy return and vital reunion of all men to himself in the slowly unfolding and ever-brightening prospects of the future ages, but that he has also, at the same time and by the very same means, brought all the inhabitants of all other worlds into closer connection and more intimate relation with his Father, and

inspired them with a deeper feeling of fealty and stronger attachment to him and his government.

And what is here so clearly intimated by the Master himself is somewhat more elaborately stated by his divinely authorized apostle:

> For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens.

When compared with the broad and liberal views which are set forth in the plain declarations of this quotation from the Scriptures, it must be confessed that the conceptions and ideas which are commonly entertained and expressed concerning the nature, design, extent, and application of the atonement seem to be far too narrow, contracted, and partial to be brought into harmony with them at all. And any attempt in that direction must prove to be a fruitless effort. If the notions about these things which are usually held and freely defended be true and reliable, only a few can reasonably indulge the fond hope of obtaining a real, valuable, lasting benefit from all that Jesus has done and endured for the race while the majority of mankind must be left to perish hopelessly in their sins.

And yet, to be perfectly frank and honest, it must be confessed that it is extremely difficult to understand how such severe limitations and hard restrictions can be even forced upon the mediatorial work of "the Son of man," in the open face of the positive utterances with which we are now dealing. Take, for example, the passages which we are already considering, as they have come to us.

In the one selected from the gospel of St. John, Jesus affirms, without manifesting anything like hesitation or doubt, that he will be able to succeed finally in attracting all men to himself by means of his humiliation and exaltation.

Now he does not so much as insinuate that he is simply going to make an honest and earnest effort to save all men, which must certainly prove in the end to be a vain and fruitless experiment so far as many of the unfortunate race are concerned. It is true, however, as has been claimed, that he says "*draw*"—not *drag*—"all men to himself." But while that is strictly true—and nobody is gladder than the writer that it is true—still, as a fact, he does not seem to anticipate anything like failure in ultimately bringing about the salvation of the entire human family though the power of his cross and its everlasting appliances.

He saves men, not by a violent exertion of sheer strength, but through the compulsory force of infinite love, backed by the free-will power of the man himself. As the prophet says:

> Jehovah appeared of old (Hebrew, *from afar*) unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.

Then we learn that no man can go so far away from Jehovah, or remain from him so very long, that he cannot reach him with the wooing manifestations and winning pleadings of his "everlasting love"; nor can he ever become so thoroughly lost that his "loving-kindness"—*his unfailing tender mercy*—will not in the end bring him back to himself.

And the great apostle of the Gentiles speaks with much confidence and boldness in the comforting and

encouraging selection which we have gathered from his writings, and have been contemplating with no small degree of pleasure and profit, in which he so strongly insists that Jesus has not only made safe beyond a peradventure the final and full happiness of the whole race of man, but that also by the same propitiatory act he has changed the feeling, attitude, and bearing of the entire universe of intelligent and responsible beings toward his Father for all time to come. And it is in view of this very fact that the fullness of the attributes and perfections of the Godhead must take up their abode and dwell in him henceforth, investing his risen and glorified humanity, which once expired in great agony upon the cross, with adequate power and perfect competency for bringing into complete harmony with the will of his Father all discordant, disobedient, or rebellious creatures in earth, heaven, or any other outlying province belonging to the boundless empire of Almighty God. And, in truth, this appears to have been the main object which was held constantly in view from the beginning of creation itself. For we find that the whole magnificent structure of the universe, in all its parts and proportions, both as to its primitive plan and final purpose, was placed fully and forever under the control and management of Jesus Christ:

> In him were all things created, in the heavens, and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist.

All of creation, in its bewildering amplitude and infinite variety, far back in the dateless periods of eter-

nity, was devised, planned, adjusted, and constructed directly in connection with the redeeming work of the divine Son of the everlasting Father. Not only was it in him, as the distinct outlining of it, with all its vast prospective possibilities, but it also has the grand realities of its actual existence in him.

And this applies to creation, in all of its parts, from the ever-changing forms and fashions of gross matter up to the different grades and names of the celestial hierarchy.

And it is equally true of things "visible" and "invisible," in heaven and on earth. For nothing at all, whether physical or spiritual, organic or inorganic, animate or inanimate, could have been brought into being apart from, and independent of, the atonement which was made through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. And again, it is affirmed that all things were created "through" him. That is to say, God made all things "through" the immediate agency of his Son. Then it was in and through him that the solid foundation was laid, the far-reaching framework put together, and the complete fabric of nature wrought out and finished. Moreover, it is asserted with great suggestiveness that "all things were created unto him." He is the final end, as well as the initial source, of creation. And as all things went out from him on their endless rounds, so they must all ultimately come back to him as the grand object of their being. Thus he "draws all things unto himself."

And all things, majestic or minute, from the mighty spheres that revolve in their orbits to the little motes that float upon sunbeams, "consist," cohere, or hold together in him. Without him, the whole universe

would go to pieces. The planets would fly off at a tangent and roll wreckfully along the infinitudes of unopposing space. And all created intelligences, losing respect for allegiance, would defiantly throw off the wholesome restraints of moral law and rush on madly to ruin.

And the great cosmos, instead of being a beautiful universe of order and harmony, would be converted into a terrible chaos of confusion and uproar.

"The Eternal Word is the goal of the universe, as he was the starting point. It must end in unity, as it proceeded from unity; and the center of this unity is Christ."

Then all things, everywhere and of every kind, belong to our Lord by original and inherent right of creation. They are his also in consideration of the sacred and inviolable covenant conditions which were agreed upon by the Persons existing in the essential trinity of the adorable Godhead, before anything was brought forth. And they have their being solely and dependently in him, and have been reconciled to the Father through his death and resurrection.

Then it must follow that the reclaiming, reforming, and saving influences, which forever flow in efficient currents from his cross, must at last reach and bring back all fallen and wicked spirits into implicit faith and devotion to the triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And it is clear that by the same great system of reconciliation he purposes to bring the innumerable ranks of the pure, good, and faultless of all worlds on high into closer union and communion with God, holiness, happiness, and heaven than they ever were be-

fore. This thought is especially emphasized by the apostle in another connection, where he says:

> Making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him unto a dispensation of the fullness of the times, to sum up (the Greek, literally rendered, means, *to head up again*) all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth.

We have no criticisms of any kind to offer upon the difficulties which may be found in the verbal forms and grammatical structure of this fathomless and far-reaching announcement. We are not hunting trouble, but simply seeking the truth.

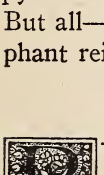
This marvelous statement reveals a profound mystery which had long been concealed in the secret counsels of the divine mind. God has here graciously made known the fact that it is his greatest pleasure, most earnest desire, and unalterable determination, in the economy of his grace, to so direct the lapsing of ages and control the passing opportunities as in due time to sum or head up again; that is to say, to collect together, or gather into one grand, harmonious body, all things which are in heaven and upon earth, and reunite them in Christ as their great, living, common head. And this sublime truth lies at the foundational idea of the promulgation of the gospel under the apostolic and Christian ministry:

> To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world (Greek, *cosmos, the whole universe*) unto himself.

Hence it appears that our Lord is made, most rightfully and properly, the head and center of this all-comprehensive family in their final recovery from sin with all of its fearful consequences, and their felicitous

and successful restoration to God's everlasting favor and friendship.

Oh, the mysterious and miraculous attraction of the cross of Christ! Who can measure its vast reach of power to recover and restore the wayward and the wicked? or calculate its wide range of effective influence for eternal good over all created intelligences? It sends a ceaseless thrill of joy to the loftiest heights of the innumerable multitudes of the unfallen and redeemed in glory, illuminates the deepest pits of perdition and darkest dungeons of despair with the hopeful light of salvation, and fills the boundless regions of immensity with all the beauties of perpetual life and cheerfulness; so that no order of beings, however happy or unhappy they may be, is overlooked or left out. But all—yes, all—are evermore included in the triumphant reign of our blessed Christ.

 UT it may be asked, How can these things be? And if they are to come to pass, must not the fallen angels also be embraced in the infinite scheme of redeeming and saving mercy? We neither affirm nor contradict. But we feel constrained just here to present some strong scriptures which look far out into this unfrequented line of legitimate inquiry.

And that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old.

One thought must force itself with great weight of meaning upon an attentive mind in connection with a

careful examination of this most striking Scripture reference; and that is the imperative fact that the term "restoration" means to put all things, which have by any chance gotten out of their position, back into their proper place, and leave them again in regular order. And, therefore, it seems that it must denote the restoration and reinstatement of the fallen and lost of all worlds back again into their original condition and first estate. And further, in the "restoration of all things" here spoken of, it would appear that there must be a thorough readjustment of all classes and grades of unfortunate beings which have in any way disturbed their former happy relations and perfect harmony with their Creator, so as to bring them back again into their original agreement with his will and government.

Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

T is fully agreed to on all hands that the phrase "things in heaven" means the good angels in all their different orders, ranks, and distinctions; that the phrase "things on earth" comprehends all men, whether good or bad, living or dead; and that the phrase "things under the earth" embraces the fallen angels, or demons damned, and lost men.

And we are here assured that all of these shall at last bow down together, "in the name of Jesus," which denotes and describes an act of solemn and sacred wor-

ship. Observe that they bow down *in,* not *at* or *to,* the name, which would be the word employed if it were done simply to recognize his power and sovereignty over them. And furthermore, it is positively stated that with common consent and complete unanimity they "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

So this marvelous act of universal adoration and highest ascription of praise does not appear to be performed upon the part of any participating in it as a forced and reluctant submission to the irresistible authority and conquering power of God; but it is a clear and full manifestation of a penitent, trusting, willing return and unconditional surrender of all the disloyal denizens of all the worlds to the gracious and glorious mediatorial dominion and reign of Jesus Christ, which can know no ending in time or eternity. He conquers his foes by kindness and love, and not by violence and wrath.

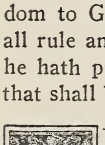
It must be that when heaven, earth, and hell come together and worship the Son of man, who is the Son of God, in concert with each other, all disaffection, alienation, and opposition toward Jehovah and his Anointed have vanished from the whole universe of worlds.

And that is just what we see here. But we marvel not, having been thoroughly prepared for the welcome sight. We know that Jesus was manifested in the flesh that he might subdue all things unto himself and bring them back again from all estrangement of every character and grade into loving unison with the will of his Father. And his work can never be finished until he has fully accomplished all this.

And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, forever and ever.

HERE are some at least who think that this intensely interesting passage of inspired truth can have but one fair and consistent interpretation put upon its language. They contend strenuously and honestly that, if it is to be looked upon as reliable in its clear and most comprehensive terms, it points with unmistakable directness and certainty to a blessed period which is on its way, and must finally come up in the ever-unfolding events of the countless ages of the future, when all sin, sorrow, and suffering of every kind and degree will be wiped away from all the worlds, and all created intelligences shall join in one endless, rapturous song of joy without a single sigh of grief or the slightest sign of impatience to mar or interfere with the universal harmony and happiness that prevail and reign everywhere.

Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.



E cannot think for a moment that our Lord will ever deliver the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, separate the divinity from the humanity, merge it back into the Godhead, and cease to reign over the saints in glory. His media-

torial kingdom, like his priesthood, must be eternal and unchangeable. Hence the angel Gabriel said to the virgin Mary, when unfolding the mysteries of the incarnation to her wondering soul, "And of his kingdom there shall be no end."

He speaks here in a positive and absolute sense. But he does reign over a kingdom which he may resign into the hands of his Father. It is the kingdom of grace in which the gospel is preached to sinners, pardon granted to penitents, and salvation given to believers. Jesus speaks especially of this kingdom in his great sermon on the mount when he says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

This kingdom was bestowed upon him by his Father for a particular purpose, to wit, the recovery of the lost, pacification of the rebellious, and the ratification of the faithful. Now when he shall have accomplished the object for which this delegated right of leadership was given to him, then he may properly return it to the original source of authority from which he received it.

In this matter one is reminded of a prince, the heir apparent to the throne of the empire, who is appointed by the king to go out with his armies and reduce certain rebellious provinces back to their subjection and fealty to the crown. And when he has accomplished the work which has been assigned to him, returning in triumph, he lays the spoils and trophies of his conquest down at his father's feet, and then surrenders his commission to him. But in all this he does not cease to be the true and lawful prince. So he keeps his honorable position at the right hand of the king.

And when Jesus shall have brought all created intelligences who have gone astray back again into perfect harmony with the will of the Almighty, he will bring all the honors which he has won for himself in obtaining the victory over sin, death, and hell, and will hang them upon the throne of his Father. Then God shall "be all in all." For by this act of filial duty and reverence the Son recognizes him as the original fountain of all power and authority.

But he must continue to occupy the mediatorial throne and perform the work of his mediation. For it is made plain that the whole of the material and moral universe is held together and kept in order through him. But the proclamation of the terms of peace and acts of pardon being no longer in demand, the whole universe of worlds having been saved or confirmed in the possession and enjoyment of eternal happiness, the kingdom of grace must give place to the kingdom of glory.

But in bringing this about there will be no violence done to the freedom of the will. All, having been reconciled to God through the death of his Son, will come of their own accord in true penitency and faith; and by their volition they will abide in it safely forever. With them, all the way through, it is a matter of choice, and not of compulsion. They could forsake God, but they will never do it. They are in no danger of committing such folly. Many things are altogether possible which must remain so perpetually as to their real existence, when there is no probability whatever that they will take place at all. They could, as to mere potentiality, happen; but they will certainly never actually come to pass. So when all things shall have

been brought back into harmony with God, it is reasonable to conclude that there will never again be another case of rebellion or relapse. The tendency of all things everywhere is toward perfection rather than deterioration. And thus the final destiny of the universe is working out slowly but surely.

But the mission, work, and reign of our Lord, even in the peculiar feature to which we have alluded as perhaps being temporary in its duration, cannot be fulfilled or come to an end until he has destroyed the last foe that dares stand upon the field against him, which is Death. And certainly this cannot simply mean the abrogation of physical mortality by the resurrection of the dead from the grave. The dissolution of the natural body is death in its milder mood and gentler manifestation. But Jesus proposes to abolish death in its worst and most fearful form, which is seen alone in the ruin of both soul and body in hell. Then he must not fail to abrogate these.

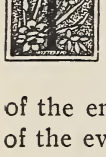
Jesus will not relinquish his prerogative to rule, or relax his efforts to save, until he has succeeded in recovering all that he has bought with his blood, completely blotted out sin, annihilated physical, spiritual, and eternal death, and banished forever sorrow and suffering from all worlds.

UT we turn reluctantly away from this enlarged and entrancing survey of the propitiatory work and ministry of our Lord, as holding together and affecting the entire creation of God with its saving force and conservative influence, that we may take notice more particularly of

the peculiar relation which every man on earth sustains to it:

For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

This inestimable scripture sets before us clearly the noble intention and grand object of the appearance of the Son of God into our wretched world. Prompted and sustained alone by the strength and tenderness of infinite love, he cheerfully and willingly laid aside the glory which he had with his Father "before the world was," and in a deeply mysterious manner took upon himself humanity with all of its innocent infirmities, imperfections, and weaknesses which he inherited through his mother; for he was "born of a woman, born under the law." And so being clothed with flesh and blood, he lived, toiled, suffered, and sorrowed among men. In all this it is strikingly indicated to us that he could not have a natural father and escape the deeper taints of depravity and the more dangerous approaches to sin. But he readily submitted to the incarnation with its humiliation, sacrifices, labors, privations, and death, to save lost man. This quotation is a grand epitome of the whole gospel.

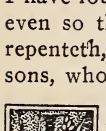


N the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke Jesus puts forth three of his finest and best parables, in each of which he is careful to show us clearly that he intends to compass the salvation of the entire race of mankind in the run of the ages of the everlasting future.

In two of these parables he presents to us the divine side of this most gracious work; and in the other one

he places before us, in the most graphic manner, the human aspect of it. So he gives us a satisfactory solution of the difficult problem of human salvation. He shows us that the sovereign grace of God and the free will of man must be brought into perfect concert of action to accomplish the desired end. But let us look at the parables themselves in their regular order.

And he spake unto them this parable, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance.



N the parable of the lost sheep we see a thoughtless sinner wandering away from God and good people. And such a person is fitly represented by a silly sheep, straggling away from the shepherd and the flock to which it belongs, by following its wayward inclination to change grazing grounds and wander about heedlessly from place to place. So the sinner yields foolishly to his perverted appetites and depraved passions, indulging them blindly, obstinately, and persistently, even to his utter undoing.

The sheep strays away and runs off of its own accord; so does the sinner. The sheep never comes back of itself; neither does the sinner. But the kind shepherd follows on after the truant sheep in all of its de-

vious and dangerous ramblings; and so does the loving Saviour follow the sinner through all the dark dens and dreadful dives of crime and iniquity.

All others may grow weary, become discouraged, and give up the chase in disappointment and despair, and turn back, leaving the poor, roving sheep to its disastrous fate; but not so with the anxious and faithful shepherd. He declares his fixed determination and settled purpose in these grand heart-cheering and world-illuminating words: "And go after it, until he find it."

And in this way Jesus, the good Shepherd, gives us to understand that he will never weary or waver in his pursuit of the lost soul, "until he find it." And in this strong and amazing asseveration he removes, in an absolute sense, all of the accustomed limitations and restrictions of time which have been placed upon the term of man's probation in attempting to confine it to this life only.

Our blessed Lord here assures us that he will not only spend the swiftly passing years of time in looking after the lost sinner, but that he will tramp eternal ages, and search through all the gloomy caverns and grimy pits of the lonely wilderness world of woe, or find him; for he is the purchase of his blood.

And like the gentle shepherd, when at last he overtakes him he will not upbraid, abuse, or beat him, in order to drive him back to his place; but, taking him in his strong arms, he will gladly lift him from his helplessness and misery, and pressing him tenderly to his loving heart, he will joyfully bring him back to heaven's fold, to wander away no more forever.

The lost sheep safely restored certainly will cleave to the Shepherd, and never leave the happy flock.

Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

ERE we behold a sinner in a most deplorable condition. He is lost. And yet he is totally unconcerned, and cares nothing at all about it. He does not so much as give it a serious thought. Truly, then, he is in a sad state. Carelessly and culpably he has unfortunately yielded to the natural bent and downward tendency of his nature, until he has sunken deeply into degradation and death. He is like an unconscious coin, pushed from its place, which, following the law of gravitation, drops into the dust, is covered up in it, and so it is completely lost to sight.

And in this case the Saviour is represented as looking carefully after the unfortunate sinner through the instrumentality of the Church, which is clearly indicated to us by the woman who is introduced in the parable. And she, like her divine Lord, is required to "seek diligently until she find it."

And in this, as in the preceding parable, the term of seeking ends alone with the finding and recovery of that which is lost. And if time should prove to be insufficient for the completion of this task, eternity must contribute of its ceaseless ages to the full accomplishment of this one leading engagement and absorbing purpose of Heaven.

Observe how industriously and persistently the searching is kept up. When one effort fails, another

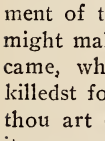
follows immediately; and when one class of means proves inefficient, another is adopted at once.

First of all, as we imagine, the house is carefully and closely examined; but the lost treasure is not discovered. So the helpful lamp is lighted, and its bright, blazing flame is deftly turned into every corner, crack, crevice, or cranny of the room; but still the hidden piece of shining silver does not come to light.

Finally, the never-failing broom, as the last resort, is taken in hand, and the process of sweeping commences, and soon every particle of dust is turned up, driven about, and thoroughly sifted; and at last the anxiously hunted little coin, escaping sight no longer, is found, and recovered in safety by the delighted owner.

And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw

him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and entreated him. But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but when this thy son came, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.



HE parable of the prodigal son is justly pronounced the pearl of all the parables. It is matchless in loveliness and beauty. In its own peerless way, it shows us a sinner striving to get back to God. He is most truly penitent, deeply grieved, and sorely troubled over a wasted and wrecked life. He has made himself familiar with vice in all forms, phases, and degrees. By a sad experience he has learned what wickedness is. As we see him, he is well-nigh prostrated. He is suffering most painfully from the degrading and destructive effects

of sin. Willfully and most shamefully he has gone swiftly down from the refinement and elegance of a most magnificent mansion of the greatest abundance of wholesome comfort and innocent pleasure into the foul filth of a pig sty. Maddened with one giddy whirl of gay dissipation after another into downright craziness, he has speedily wrought out his own unhappy doom with the disgusting relish of swinish greediness. Through the wild ways of baneful revelry and a rapid course of gross, licentious conduct, he rushed quickly upon his ruin. And pinched keenly with severe hunger, and with the frightful horrors of starvation staring him full in the face, finally "he came to himself." This last expression is more than a mere intimation that sin is at least a spell of insanity. It is an indirect declaration that he had gone beside himself. But suddenly he is awakened from the strange, delusive dream of carnal indulgence, and aroused from the deceptive fascination of the temporary lunacy of luxurious and lascivious living, into which he had recklessly fallen. And in his sober, serious, thoughtful moments of returning soundness of mind and reflection, he wisely entered into a solemn resolution to go back to his father. And about the same time he properly decided to seek no higher position in his father's family than that of a hired servant. And with these humble feelings, earnest desires, and most worthy purposes maturely formed in his mind and firmly fixed in his heart, and also filled with the fondest hopes and most tormenting fears, he started promptly but slowly on his anxious and wearisome journey. He has lost all that makes his life dear. He is completely stripped of everything. He has nothing left. With garments tat-

tered and torn; with feet tired, bruised, and bleeding; with heart aching, full, overflowing, and breaking with unspeakable anguish, he, with slow, heavy, measured, faltering step, at last approaches the dear old home of his once happy, innocent, childhood days, which he had so rudely and foolishly left for an abandoned life of dishonor and total misery. He is most thoroughly penitent on account of his inexcusable transgressions; and he is much grieved because of his enormous crimes which he has committed against Heaven and in the sight of his father. And he does not attempt to conceal, palliate, or in any way extenuate his unparalleled guilt. But with a consuming sorrow and bitterness of soul, he most frankly confessed all his sins which he had so boldly and defiantly put forth. And with a distressing consciousness and a crushing sense of unworthiness, he modestly submits his case, and does not claim the confidence or even ask to be restored to the affections of the injured father, whom he feels he has so cruelly and causelessly wronged. But that kind and generous father was the first of all to discern his coming: "But while he was yet afar off his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

And so it was that the faithful father's ever-watchful eye of yearning love caught the first glimpse of the pitiable form of his poor, weeping, ruined, prodigal boy, as he was returning to him. And his noble paternal soul was moved to its mighty depths. And he ran forth to meet him with the unequaled alacrity and unconscious swiftness of a father's infinite love, and folding him warmly to his joyous bosom, with unutterable affection and undying fervor he kissed him an

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eternal welcome to his forgiving heart and happy home. That was a moment of transcendent bliss both to the glad father and his recovered boy.

Thus we are permitted to witness with devout amazement the abounding joy of the bright angelic host above over the bringing back of the lost sheep to the deserted fold. Now the interest which these celestial spirits feel and the delight which they manifest, when a sinner is brought to God, may evince something more than a general concern which all pure, holy beings must share in common with each other in the present prosperity, and in anticipation of the final success of the cause of God in the perfect happiness of all created intelligences. The extraordinary desire which they exhibit to look into these things is a sufficient evidence that they are personally concerned in them. Hence they are spoken of as bending forward, or stooping over the grand scheme of redemption that they may watch it in its wonderful unfoldings and practical workings; and so, by constant, close, and intense study, be able to look down to the bottom of it. Their own stability in bliss and security in glory may, in some way unknown to us, be involved in it.

And then the salvation of man seems in itself to be a matter of great pleasure to them. "It is the only joy on earth with which we have proof that angels sympathize."

And in the discovery of the lost piece of silver, and its restoration to its vacant place, we are specially reminded of the rapturous delight of "the spirits of just men made perfect," whose innumerable multitude has come together from all the countries of earth and all the ages of the world, and is resting in the beautiful

groves, on the flowery plains and Elysian fields of Paradise, the fair realm of the invisible Hades.

There sweeps no desolating wind
Across that calm, serene abode.

And here we have one of the most precious and comforting assurances that has been given to us anywhere in the entire Bible in reference to our loved and sainted ones who have been taken from us and our happy homes in this life and transported to the everlasting joys beyond. Our eyes are dull and holden now so that we cannot see them; but from their lofty heights of undimmed vision and undisturbed peace, like clouds of kindly protection, they constantly hover over us and look down upon us. And our welfare in all lines of spiritual development and religious enjoyment is a perennial source of ecstatic pleasure to them. When we are happy here on earth, it makes them shout in heaven. Our conversion from sin to righteousness, the regeneration of our spirits, the purity of our souls, the sanctity of our bodies, and our continued preservation unto eternal life, thrill them with endless bliss and wreathe their gleaming faces with fadeless smiles of gladness.

But at last we behold the grandest of all great festivals, look upon the most luminous of all brilliant lights, listen to the sweetest strains of all musical entertainments, and gaze upon the most entrancing scenes and manifestations of supreme felicity in heaven's endless and tireless dance of transporting, overflowing, imperishable rapture and rejoicing on the occasion of the return of the prodigal son, and his father's affectionate reception of him from all his wicked wanderings, back to his home with all its com-

forts, honors, and blessings, by granting him full, free pardon, and an open, unconditional welcome.

And let us observe that in all these splendid parables we are particularly reminded of the important fact that it was the last and only lost sheep that was sought and found. And when it was brought back to the fold, the flock was unbroken. The man had but one hundred sheep in the beginning, and he folded that number in the end. He lost nothing which he did not find.

It was also the last and only lost piece of silver that was hunted and regained. And when it was placed in the hand of the well-pleased owner, the number of coins was complete. The woman had only ten pieces in the beginning, and she counts ten in the end; so she possesses all she ever had.

And it was the last and the only lost prodigal son who came back, weeping over his sins and pleading for pardon, from the foreign country of suffering, sorrow, starvation, and death, and was forgiven and received by his father into his jubilant house of perpetual rejoicing. And he was welcomed back with the grandest demonstrations of festive delight and gladness because in his return the family circle was made complete. When he came in, there was not a missing link in the perfect golden chain of home happiness to mar its beauty or diminish its everlasting peace. The father never had but two sons, and now he shall have them forever with him in the sacred joy of his perfect home.

And we cannot but think that these inspired illustrations are intended to represent to us the happiest hour that can come up in the history of the uncounted worlds that float in the flashing depths of immensity.

And in ceaseless celebration of this most conspicuous occasion, let the mighty shout of universal triumph ring through all the spheres:

Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth.

In taking our leave of this remarkable group of splendid parables, we deem it proper to call special attention to the unity of design which pervades them. They do not teach that God, in saving men, deals radically different with different kinds of sinners. "These examples represent not two distinct experiences, but two sides of the same fact. It is not that some of fallen human kind are saved after the manner of the strayed sheep, and others after the manner of the prodigal son; not that the Saviour bears one wanderer home by his power, and another of his own accord arises and returns to the Father. Both these processes are accomplished in every conversion. The man comes, yet Christ brings him; Christ brings him, yet he comes."

So it is sovereign grace and human agency working together in perfect harmony to the same end—the salvation of the soul.

UT we come now to the examination of certain texts of Scripture which are supposed to teach that the destinies of men are fixed unchangeably for the future at death.

The wicked shall be turned back unto Sheol,
Even all the nations that forget God.

When the psalmist uttered these famous words, it is altogether evident that the fate of the wicked in the future world in none of its alarming features whatever

was present to his mind. At that particular time all such frightful thoughts must have been foreign to him. Clearly his only intention was to point out the certain and swift overthrow—that sudden and unexpected discomfiture—which is always liable, and most likely to come upon impious men who place themselves in active opposition to the Lord and fight stubbornly against his plans and purposes. And his notions and words in regard to the matter are confined strictly and solely to this life. He does not attempt to follow the unfortunate persons of whom he is speaking beyond death and the grave, either in imagination or expression. He uses exactly the same form of speech in the third verse of this very Psalm. But there he employs it in describing the violent end which overtook his own enemies who seem to have been pursuing him at the time:

> When mine enemies turn back,
> They stumble and perish at thy presence.

Now a little consideration given to the subject at this particular point will enable us to understand more fully and correctly his obvious meaning in the seventeenth verse. Observe carefully that the emphasis should by no means be placed upon the bare fact that the wicked are "turned back unto Sheol," which is an event that comes alike, sooner or later, to all men, even to the best of them as well as to the worst. But the stress is designed to be put upon the unanticipated time, place, and manner of its coming. And it is here assumed that their sad and speedy removal from life will not only be a great surprise to them, but that it will also bring along with it the unmistakable marks and tokens of a divine judgment.

However, if we were to allow that it may have a direct application to the doom of the wicked in the world to come, still it could render no assistance in settling the question which is in contention, for it fails at the main point for the establishment of which it has been pressed into service, as it discloses nothing at all about the nature or duration of future punishment.

And if a tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be.

HERE is not the slightest or remotest allusion here to the condition of a man, in any respect whatever, after death. And it is remarkable, not to say perfectly astounding, that any such an idea ever could have been extracted, rather extorted, from it. Such a sense is altogether foreign to its obvious meaning. And it is difficult to conceive of a construction which could be forced upon it that would more violently and arbitrarily wring and twist it from its only natural and reasonable application to the plain facts in the case. Solomon is simply trying to induce and encourage the people to be more hospitable, generous, and charitable to one another. And to influence them to engage in these things more readily and freely, he gives them the fullest assurance that such noble deeds of kindness ought to be done, for they are commendable in themselves as they are right, and can never fail in the end to bring back a rich reward to the sincere and unselfish donor. Therefore, he insists that they shall not deal out their helpful benefits with a stinted hand or grudging heart; but urges them to scatter their benevolent distribu-

tions abroad in the greatest abundance without special regard to the outward appearances of things. Hear him:

> Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, yea, even unto eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

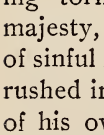
And he further enforces his wise admonitions to charitable contributions and actions by reminding them of the important fact that in the drifting and shifting course of divine providence many unlooked-for changes take place in the affairs of men. Sometimes the poor become rich, and the rich get to be very poor. And it seems to be a cardinal principle in philanthropy that he who willfully neglects the golden opportunity for helping others when he could do so cannot complain if they refuse to assist him in the time of his poverty and need. No man should demand or expect aid from his fellows who never conferred such favors upon them in their destitution and want. It often happens in the turning of the fateful wheel of capricious fortune that the most independent are found in the passing of the years as utterly helpless as a fallen tree, which must lie in its place of dust and sand, whether prostrated toward the warm south or prone toward the cold north, until some strong hand shall lift it up and place it into a more suitable position. But a man in such a condition who has blessed others has a perfect, divine right to expect comfort in his misfortune and desperate estate. And he shall not be disappointed. It will come to him.

But there can be no allusion in this quotation to anything that may take place in another mode of ex-

istence. And to enforce the ordinary interpretation upon it has about as much reason in it as there would be in concluding from the terms contained in the first member of this same verse—"If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth"—that these clouds, which are filled with water, and emptying themselves upon the dry and parched ground, to bless and fructify it, so as to make the green, tender grass grow, and cause the sweet, fragrant flowers to bloom, are, instead of all these delightful things, heavily charged with wrathful fire, ready to be poured out in copious showers of burning curses upon the sinful ones of earth.

The one inference or explanation is as consistent with truth as the other; and no more so. They are both palpably erroneous and grossly absurd. Nothing can be plainer to the thoughtful.

Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

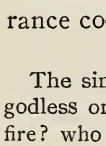


VERY sad change is here depicted by the eminent Judean prophet concerning the most wretched situation of the unfortunate king of Babylon. He describes him as being torn ruthlessly away from the overwhelming majesty, pomp, and splendor of his magnificent palace of sinful luxury. He is represented as hurled out, and rushed into the melancholy regions of Sheol, because of his overweening self-conceit, arrogant pride, and cruel oppression. And it seems that his appearance in the gloomy realm of earth's departed ones was so sud-

den and unlooked for that the shades of the heroes and of the mighty dead were for the moment startled and thrown into confusion at his unexpected presence and pitiable plight. He is seen stripped of royal claims, lofty mien, military bearing, despotic power, and reduced to utter helplessness. And in the commotion of the hour they appear to the vision of the prophet as coming hastily together to behold, reproach, and mock him in his great humiliation. These disturbed spirits are evidently the kings and princes whom this most haughty, overbearing, turbulent monarch had defeated, degraded, and afflicted in this life. The whole dissertation, throughout, is extremely metaphorical. And it settles nothing as regards the affairs of the departed in connection with the future.

And there is not the slightest hint in it to the punishment of the king of Babylon in the world to come for his wicked conduct on earth. The impenetrable veil of unbroken concealment is dropped upon the scene at death. So we are not permitted to look upon anything that took place after the entrance of the great monarch into Sheol. The history is perfectly silent as to his future destiny. We are left in hopeless ignorance concerning it. Inquiry in that direction is vain.

The sinners in *Zion* are afraid; trembling has seized the godless ones: Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?



T is astonishingly strange that this plain, simple scripture should, at any time, under any circumstances, have been quoted by any one in support of the popular dogma of the future, unconditional, endless torture of incorrigible

criminals in the moral government of God. No thought could possibly be more radically antagonistic and thoroughly repugnant to its real meaning than the actual fires and fadeless flames of an eternal and hopeless perdition.

It has no such an import, and can have no such an application. Why, as extraordinary and unaccountable as it may appear to some, "the devouring fire" and "everlasting burnings," mentioned here by the evangelical prophet, are nothing more nor less than the bright, shining, visible displays of the glory and majesty of the Lord our God. And if we would satisfy our minds fully on this point, it is only necessary for us to read the three verses which immediately follow the quotation. They contain a satisfactory answer to the questions propounded:

> He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from taking a bribe, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil: he shall dwell on high; his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; his bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty: they shall behold a land that reacheth afar.

There is a striking resemblance between these questions and the answers to them, and the questions put forth in the fifteenth Psalm and the answers which are returned to them. No one can read one without being forcibly reminded of the other. And they mutually assist in explaining each other.

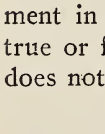
Now in the instance which we have under advisement, the clear, comprehensive question is boldly put: Who among us is able to approach the awful, burnish-

ing throne of Jehovah? or who of us can abide in the flaming manifestations of his immaculate purity and infinite righteousness? And the response is readily returned in the verses already referred to as furnishing it. And according to it a man must be clean in his inner life and correct in his outer life before he can dwell happily in the presence of God.

And is it not strongly suggested here that the most painful position that a sinner could possibly be placed in would be for him to have a clear conception of the perfect holiness of the Lord with a full consciousness of his own impurities? Could any condition excel that in woefulness and wretchedness? But this is a simple suggestion; and that is all. Then the whole of the lofty passage is designed to set forth that great, spiritual preparation which is indispensably essential to fit any one and every one to enter into heaven, and enable him to stand there in the immediate presence of God, rather than to point out that deeply abandoned state which must necessarily sink the soul down to hell.

No; the dreadful doctrine of unchangeable punishment in the future history of the ungodly, whether true or false, finds no favor or recognition here. It does not come to sight.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.



HIS is the only clear and specific reference, found anywhere in all the voluminous writings of the Old Testament, which points with anything like certainty to future rewards and retributions that must be meted out to the right-

eous and wicked after the general resurrection and final judgment. But there can be no manner of doubt, in any reasonable and candid mind, as to the proper application and correct meaning of this short and plain fragment of holy writ, in connection with these momentous matters. And it speaks with a voice of warning and admonition to the whole race of mankind, during the few rapidly running years of this life and throughout the interminable ages of the future.

But while all this is strictly true, the prophet of the captivity does not undertake, or even intimate, an answer for the settlement of the anxious inquiry in regard to the immutable character which many claim the destinies of men assume beyond death and the awful bar of God's inflexible justice. He leaves that ever vexed and most absorbing subject an open question. Perhaps he does this on the ground—which is altogether sufficient—that these things must always depend upon the free and independent choice of men, both in this world and that which is to come. And as in the one, so in the other, they must be governed by the same rules and regulations. Everywhere and under all conditions, faith—fiducial trust—in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, must bring pardon, peace, and happiness; while disobedience cannot fail to introduce sin, suffering, and death. If a man should disobey in heaven, he would wreck his fidelity and lose his crown. And if a man should believe in the Son of God in hell, he would leave woe and anguish behind and enter weal with rejoicing. And so it is, every man holds his doom for time and eternity in his own hands and disposes of it as he wills. He has it forever in his power to be righteous or wicked, happy or miserable, just as

he likes. He is born with this high prerogative, and never parts with it. He cannot.

Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the last farthing.

HESE verses contain the very words of the Master himself. And they are to be considered in direct contact with the context, which consists of the four verses preceding it, in which our Lord clearly recognizes the universal brotherhood of man, which necessarily presupposes the divine Fatherhood of God, and from that particular standpoint teaches us how we ought to deal with one another. And in this special case he finds it important to enter into an interpretation of the sixth commandment, which he applies to the inward spirit of the mind as well as to the overt actions of the life. He singles out anger as the wicked disposition, which, if encouraged, may result in the commission of murder—that bloody, wicked deed. Hence he warns us against cherishing wrath, holding a grudge, or indulging an unrelenting or unforgiving spirit. All these things, as he goes on to show, are far more hurtful to us than to our fellow-men. For by yielding to these evil tempers we are sure to destroy ourselves. And, therefore, he earnestly admonishes us to persistently seek reconciliation to those whom we may have wronged while in a fit of bad passion toward them.

And this brings us into close contact with the ref-

erence which we have in hand for examination at this time, which is clearly parabolical in meaning. He uses here simply as an illustration the decision of an earthly court which has been passed upon a man for a debt that he owes, to remind us of the far greater judgment that God may hold over us on account of enmity against others for which we have not repented.

It is generally admitted, we believe, by those having undertaken to expound this scripture, that our Lord is speaking of the great and dreadful day of judgment, when all men will be required to give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad, in order that they may be duly rewarded or punished for the same.

And here he presents the condition of the wicked under the striking similitude of one who is liable for an onerous debt. And he urges that the wisest and best course that the transgressor can pursue is for him to come to terms speedily in this present life, upon the good ground that it is much more prudent for the arraigned debtor to seek an interview, enter into an agreement, and so effect a compromise with the creditor, "while with him in the way," before he gets him to the awful bar of justice, where the judge will take charge of the case, and at the end of the trial may hand him over to the officer, that the penalty of the law may be executed upon him, even unto a hard and rigorous imprisonment. And, as every one must realize, this is the only proper step that the impenitent sinner can take. What a fearful error it is to neglect the salvation of the soul! It is the saddest and the most fatal mistake that any man ever made. And like the debtor here cited to trial, and advised to adjust matters with

the adversary before entering into a legal contest with him at the tribunal of stern justice, it would certainly be of infinite advantage to the sinner for him to become reconciled to God ere he is called upon to meet him in judgment; for it must be a fearful thing to appear before "the judgment seat" of a rejected Christ. And surely no torture could equal the extreme bitterness of agony and intolerable remorse of soul which must always arise inevitably from a consciousness of the unparalleled guilt of having carelessly, cruelly, and obstinately neglected and spurned, all through this life, the standing offer of a full and free pardon of all sin upon the easy condition of faith in the atoning and sanctifying blood of the "Son of man," who must at last, as our Judge, crown us in glory or confine us in the dungeons of perdition.

As for the duration of the term of the imprisonment inflicted upon the insolent debtor, it was conditioned alone upon the liquidation of the debt in full. And it would be well for us to note the fact that no given length of time or any special amount of suffering is agreed upon as an equivalent for the debt. The simple confinement within the prison walls, whether the time be long or short, cannot in any way or sense satisfy the unpaid claim. The whole debt must be canceled in currency. And the imprisonment cannot come to an end until this is done. If the prisoner cannot meet it—and he cannot—some one else must, before he can be released from his cell.

But the contention is made vigorously that whatever may be allowed in the case of the delinquent debtor, when the obdurate sinner has been banished from the peaceful presence of God and committed to the dismal

pits of perdition, his condition is necessarily rendered hopeless, for the simple reason that he must remain forevermore insolvent and helpless. Therefore, it is strenuously insisted upon that he must suffer eternally. But is it not equally true that he is as completely bankrupt and as utterly unable to meet the claims of divine justice against him in this life as he can possibly be in the world to come, and if met at all, anywhere or at any time, it must be done for him by another? And in this case our Lord throws much light upon this particular feature of the question. He does vastly more than to give out a strong intimation that the settlement of the debt has been provided for, and that it can be paid off and the prisoner released. And we know full well the only way in which this can take place, so far as the sinner is concerned in this life: it is by faith in Jesus Christ. And when he believes, no difference where, he must be saved.

And this seems to be the very thought which our Lord is endeavoring to impress upon us in this instance. And we cannot see how he could have been clearer in his explanation than he has been. If he has failed to make the matter perfectly plain to every one, it is simply because it is impossible for it to be done. It does seem that he had the final disposition of the dreadful dogma of the unconditional, endless punishment of the lost in the future world directly in view when he was uttering these sublime sentiments. For if he had stopped—ceased to speak further—when he so emphatically affirmed, "Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence," the everlasting confinement of the lost sinner in perdition would have been established beyond the possibility of

change. But when he, with manifest deliberation and thoughtfulness, added, "Till you have paid the last farthing," with his own tender hand he intentionally slipped the strong bolts of perdition. And then it was that an ever-brightening gleam of hope shone forth in beauty from the infinite depths of divine mercy, and went speedily forward, borne upon the welcome wings of the angel of pity, and glimmered with kindling splendor through all the dreary and desolate regions of damnation, until eternal hope revived in every hopeless bosom.

And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteousness into eternal life.

HIS very familiar and popular text of Scripture occupies a prominent position in the extensive literature of the Church in regard to the punishment of the wicked in the future world, which is generally acknowledged to be one of the most abstruse and difficult questions found in the wide range of New Testament eschatology. And it is always in demand when an investigation or discussion of this subject is going on. Generally on such occasions much learned criticism is indulged in by the zealous and enthusiastic disputants. In the fierce and often fruitless logomachy, the words themselves are subjected to the closest, severest, and most crucial tests. Of course this is done to get at their true meaning. All of which is well enough, right and proper. No one, on reasonable grounds, could produce a legitimate objection to it. Much good has come out of it to many, and perhaps no harm has resulted from it

to any. But so far as we are interested in the matter—and that is a great deal—we are frank to confess that we do not see any special need of the verbal criticism argument; for the simple reason that the words and terms contained in the quotation take their special signification more particularly from their grammatical arrangement and association in the structure of the sentence than from their radical meaning and etymological combination. Comparatively speaking, it is a matter of small moment whether the Greek adjective, which is represented in the English translation by the word "eternal," really signifies endless duration or simply a limited period of time. For instance, to make it as clear as possible to the mind, to say that "these shall go away into eternal punishment" is altogether different in meaning from the similar expression, "and these shall go away into punishment eternally." The first form of speech denotes that the punishment itself is eternal; but at the same time it allows that these may go away into it only for a definite term; while in the other form it is positively stated that these shall go away into it to remain there forever. In the one case the punishment may be limited and its continuation made dependent upon circumstances; but in the other, it is entirely unconditional and absolute.

And by way of illustration we may say that the penitentiary or state prison is an eternal institution for the punishment, correction, and reformation of criminals. But it does not follow of necessity that when a man is placed within those dismal walls he has gone in there to stay forever. Offenders against law and order are put in there to serve out different periods of time. And as these expire, they return to liberty.

And so it may be with the wicked in the future world. There they must suffer for the crimes done in the days of the flesh. But in their case there will be this exception and essential difference: the lost sinner must endure the extreme tortures and pangs of condemnation until he repents and believes, which he may do at any moment and be released. Suffering, however severe or protracted, can never atone for sin. But faith in the blood of Jesus Christ never fails to bring pardon, and always cleanses the soul from the foulest stains and deepest guilt.

But after all, what we have said may not be entirely satisfactory to some. They may not so clearly perceive or fully appreciate the distinction which we make between the adjective and adverbial forms of the word "eternal." They may look upon them as being more imaginary than real.

And the illustration taken from the penitentiary may also be regarded as insufficient, inasmuch as it is not, in fact, an eternal institution.

So we will try to make the matter perfectly satisfactory, if we can do so, by using an example from the Holy Scriptures. The apostate angels, the first transgressors and oldest sinners in the government of God, so far as our knowledge extends, were once, according to the popular interpretation of the Bible account of the matter, in a heaven of eternal happiness; but they fell away from it, and were cast into hell:

> God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell (Greek, *Tartarus*), and committed them to pits of darkness to be reserved unto judgment.
>
> And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

Now when these disobedient spirits were ejected from the heaven of eternal happiness, it continued undisturbed in the duration of its bliss, as if they had remained there in it. It was not affected in the least, one way or another, by their action or destiny.

And this is proof enough that lost souls may come up out of perdition without interfering in any way whatever with the continuation of that dreadful place. It does not necessarily follow that because hell may be a prison of eternal punishment, if indeed for a moment we were to admit for the sake of argument the mere possibility of the truthfulness of such a revolting proposition, that just simply on that account when a man goes there he is obliged to stay forever. If that were true, when the angels were in heaven, which is a place of eternal happiness, they would have been compelled to continue there always. If they sinned and fell from eternal bliss, men may repent and come out of eternal misery. Both occurrences are equally reasonable. And if one has taken place, the other may come to pass. There can be no doubt of that.

But the truth is, Heaven and Hell are not abstract places of weal or woe, existing independently, of themselves, separate and apart from everything else. But they are simply concrete conditions or states of happiness or misery, which we make for and in ourselves by our virtuous or vicious manner of living. It takes vastly more than mere locations or outward surroundings to bring blessedness or wretchedness to intelligent, immortal, and responsible beings. These are things that they create for themselves, and hold in possession by their own voluntary obedience or disobedience to the will of God.

Verily I say unto you, All their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

HERE is one, and only one, unpardonable sin. It is mentioned alone in the three synoptic gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give an account of it. The words and terms which they employ in speaking of it are very much alike. Besides these references, there is no other allusion to it by any of the inspired writers. We have the only statement of it from our Lord himself. He invariably calls it "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." Then it can hardly be considered correct to denominate it "the unpardonable sin," though this is almost universally done. But still it is clearly a misnomer. And in the interest of truth, as well as for the sake of accuracy, its use should be diligently avoided.

Jesus significantly and sharply contrasts it with all the other sins and blasphemies committed by men or known among them. Evidently this peculiar form was not a mere accident upon his part. He adopted it intentionally and with a definite purpose in view. He designed to isolate it from all the other sins and blasphemies that men are liable to engage in. And let it be borne in mind that he who may become guilty of this most fearful and fatal of all sins is doomed thereby to eternal and inevitable destruction. Nor is a repetition of the error necessary to accomplish with infinite certainty the hopeless ruin of the soul. Committed once, the unfortunate offender is forthwith condemned in this world and surely damned in the next, and with-

out any chance of escape at that. Truly it is a unique sin—strange in its nature and most extraordinary in its results. And it has given rise to as much real perplexity and painful anxiety to the puzzled minds of honest inquirers after the truth as any other question in the expansive and varied range of the wide realm of Christian theology. And it is neither in accordance with divine revelation nor human reason to suppose that a subject of such vast and vital importance to mankind should be left veiled in the dark mist and impenetrable gloom of mystery. Of all other things, it would seem that it ought to be made the plainest. And this being true, we may expect to meet with no very serious trouble in our earnest endeavor to study it out, if we only look right straight into the face of the Scriptures.

Blasphemia is a word of frequent occurrence in the writings of the Greek Testament. And it is translated in manifold ways in our English versions by such terms as "blasphemy," "revile," "slanderously reported," "being defamed," "evil speaking," "railings."

According to these examples, the sin of blasphemy consists in verbal abuse. The nature of the crime is always the same. Its magnitude and turpitude, however, depend upon the dignity and majesty of the one against whom it is vented and the relation sustained by the transgressor to him. But to comprehend more fully and clearly what "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is, which is pronounced by our Saviour to be "an eternal sin," and for which there can be no pardon in time or eternity, we must look closely to the particular circumstances which gave rise to his forcible and fearful remarks in connection with it.

We learn from the inspired history of the matter that our Lord had just expelled a demon from an unfortunate man who was both "blind and dumb." Now when the unclean spirit was cast out of him, the man was enabled to see and speak. And on account of this miracle the people who witnessed it were about to receive him as the promised Messiah. They exclaimed with wonder and admiration, "Can this be the Son of David?" "But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons." It is clear from this that "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit," speaking in general terms, is declaring from the most malevolent intentions, and in open violence to the deepest convictions of judgment, that Jesus wrought his miracles directly through the agency of the supreme demon, and not by the Spirit of God, as he claimed. It is spitefully attributing the wonders which Christ performed, in attestation of his holy mission into this world to save men, to the influence of Satan. It is wickedly accusing him, against light and knowledge, of being in compact with the powers of darkness to carry out successfully the most wicked designs of an impostor. Such would be the terrible offense which is here described.

But "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" is further marked out by several distinguishing features and peculiarities.

First. It is confined to the Third Person in the adorable Trinity. The presence of three distinct Personalities in the unity of the Godhead denotes the natural and necessary mode of the divine existence, and also designates their union and associations with each other forever, and their sepcial relations to man in

connection with the work of redemption. And it is only when considered in this particular light that a man may blaspheme against any one of them in an official sense without involving either of the others.

Second. It is restricted to the tongue. It belongs to the utterance of the voice, made in audible expression. The power of speech is fraught with the means of the highest happiness or the deepest misery to men. In vindication of this proposition, listen to the rich man's fervent but fruitless prayer in Hades to Abraham:

> And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.

He does not seek to obtain relief for any other member of his suffering body, however full of guilt and pain it may have been. It would seem from this that the fierce, burning, consuming, and intolerable agonies of his damnation had accumulated upon his tongue, and had intensified upon the painfully tortured organ of human speech. Perhaps he had censured and reproached the beggar in this life with that unruly member of the body which is now made the center of the anguish of his perdition. What a startling warning against an unwise and unwary use of the tongue!

Third. It is limited to those Jews who were living in the days of the incarnation, and were contemporaries with "the Son of man" while he was on the earth. And no one else has ever been in any danger whatever of committing this most dreadful and destructive of all sins.

Fourth. And with all its imminent perils and most terrible results, this extraordinary sin is bounded

strictly by the brief duration of the public ministry of our Lord among men. And when his divine mission here on earth closed, the possibility of the exposure of man to this high offense against the Holy Spirit was forever obliterated.

So we may conclude with full confidence that in order that any one may have been able to perpetrate this most awful and presumptuous of all iniquities—"the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit"—he must have been a pure, genuine Jew, living in the land of Judea in the days of the public ministry of Jesus Christ, and perfectly conversant with all the Hebrew prophecies which relate to him and point him out distinctly as the promised Messiah. He must also have had ocular and auricular demonstrations of the miraculous works and marvelous words of the distinguished descendant from king David, which prove absolutely that he was the Chosen One, the Anointed of the everlasting Father. And then he must have, in sheer defiance, in the very face of the overwhelming and irresistible conviction of his mind and heart, maliciously pronounced the whole majestic system of redeeming mercy and recovering grace a most stupendous fraud, and viciously declared its holy Author in collusion with the prince of all evil, to deceive, mislead, and ruin men.

There is no man now living upon the bright surface of the broad earth that is in the least danger whatever of becoming guilty of "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." There is no such a thing now as an unpardonable sin; there never was until Jesus Christ was found tabernacling in the flesh among men in this world, and never has been since he ascended upon the beautiful cloud from the glory-covered top of Mount

Olivet back to heaven, and never will be any more. All men everywhere, even the most wicked and reckless, as they are roving about in the blackest regions of sin and rioting foolishly in the foulest dens and dives of iniquity, can easily and readily obtain a full and free remission of all their past offenses by a simple and honest compliance with the reasonable and effective terms of "the gospel of the grace of God." And we feel ourselves altogether safe in assuming the position that no one has ever been so unfortunate as to have committed this most destructive of all crimes.

We are truly glad to find that the first offer of forgiving mercy was made immediately after the death and resurrection of Jesus, alike and indiscriminately to all his enemies, opposers, persecutors, and murderers. Many of them accepted it promptly, and were saved.

Then it is obvious that the only persons who have lived and could have committed this "eternal sin," for which there could be no pardon, heeded the timely warning so mercifully given to them by "the Son of man," and happily escaped the most awful fate of hopeless despair which it would certainly have brought upon them.

But in speaking of this peculiar sin, St. Matthew represents the Saviour as saying in case any one should commit the great sin:

"It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come"—*neither in time nor eternity.*

By this form of expression Jesus could have meant but one thing; and that must be the potent fact that all the sins and blasphemies known unto men may be forgiven them, both in this world and in that which is to

come, excepting this one, the most flagrant and fatal of them all, and which can never be pardoned, neither in this life nor in that which is to come. And if this is not his meaning, we are at a complete loss to find anything like an intelligent interpretation to his plain language. For he could have had no reason whatever, that we can see, for speaking of these sins and blasphemies as he does, in connection with the world to come, if they could not be forgiven in the future. Then it seems perfectly plain that he intended to teach that "all their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and their blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme," both in this life and in that life which is to come, with the sole exception of "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." If sins are not forgiven in the other world, why should Jesus mention the matter at all in his discourse? We can see no reason for it. But if they are pardoned over there, as here in this life, his words are proper, right, and straight to the purpose; otherwise, they seem unnecessary, not to say out of place.

And this idea of salvation from sin in the future world comports exactly with what St. Peter says:

> Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.

Any attempt to explain this scripture, by simply saying that it signifies that Christ preached by his Spirit through Noah to the antediluvians, is purely arbitrary. And it violently forces upon the plain lan-

guage of eternal truth a foreign construction which is by no means admissible. For the apostle tells us most positively, and as clearly as he possibly could have spoken it, that the preaching which Christ did to these spirits in prison, who had been disobedient in the days of Noah, was done by him after his death upon the cross and before his resurrection from the sepulcher. Then we are to understand him as meaning that our Lord entered the place appointed and set apart for the retention and detention of all disembodied human spirits, both saved and lost, during the interval between his crucifixion upon Calvary and his resuscitation from the grave, and preached (Greek, *heralded,* or *proclaimed*) the gospel of salvation to lost sinners who were at that time confined as prisoners in the melancholy realm of Hades, elsewhere called Tartarus.

And it is clearly intimated here that the Saviour filled this important mission of his redeeming work in the incompleteness of his personal existence. His body, which was mortal like the bodies of all other men, and therefore subject to death, dissolution, and decay, did actually expire upon the cross in great pain and agony, and was at this time still slumbering in the rock vault of the tomb. But he was "quickened in the spirit." And so his spirit, embodied in his soul, and thus preserving his consciousness and identity as "the Son of man," went forth carrying the message of love and life, and delivered it to the sinful spirits who were lingering in their dreary dungeons on account of their disobedience in patriarchal times. And from this we may see that it is possible for the disembodied spirits of the pure and good to have access to, and ad-

minister unto, the souls of the lost in holy things, which may lead to their salvation even after the death of the body.

But some may suppose that this extraordinary ministry of our Lord was granted for some special reason to these particular transgressors who lived anterior to the flood, and denied to all other offenders. But this same inspired writer, whose words we are now considering, in another part of this very epistle, removes all restrictions and makes it absolutely universal:

> For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

It is here asserted in plain and unmistakable terms that the gospel is still preached to men after death, just as it is to living ones. The form and sense of the divine declaration carry along with it the strongest indication that it is presented to them who have gone beyond the shores of time in the same way and for the same purpose that it is proclaimed to them in this life. And hence it appears that there is no break or serious interruption made in the probationary state of man by death. But, on the contrary, it is perfectly clear that there is an unchanging continuation of the possibility of repentance, faith, and salvation from sin in the next mode of existence, just as there is in this life. And the offer is extended there on precisely the same principles and terms that it is here.

And the demand and necessity for such a course are clearly seen in the well-known fact that there are many great and unavoidable inequalities and disparities in the opportunities and advantages granted unto men in this world, rendering it easy and almost certain for

some to know and perform the will of God; and at the same time making it very difficult and well-nigh impossible for others to release themselves from pollution and iniquity. And in verification of this truth we are not obliged to go away to heathen lands, where Christ and his religion are unknown and unheard of; but right here in our midst some are born in Christian homes of refinement and purity, and trained into beautiful lives of honesty and religion, while others find their birthplace in the dirty slums of wickedness and wretchedness, from the filth and sinfulness of which they can scarcely free themselves in a whole lifetime. They are born, bred, and brought up in foulness and crime. They can hardly be held accountable for what they do. They owe their ignorance and criminality to their unfortunate condition and correspondents in life, rather than to their own choice or personal responsibility.

And it is more than probable that our Lord himself was thinking right along on this line of things when he uttered the following most thoughtful words:

> Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.
>
> And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day.

This quotation is also found in St. Luke's gospel. It is generally resorted to in the argument to prove

that guilt and punishment are regulated by, and in proportion to, enlightenment and opportunity. And while this is recognized as being true, there certainly is another idea contained in it which is equally important, and which is made as prominent; and it is this: our heavenly Father has assured us, in the gift of his "only begotten Son," that he intends to save all men upon the plan which he has set forth in the gospels. And we can expect nothing less of him than to carry out this pledge, or exhaust the boundless resources of the covenant of grace in the effort to do so. And if unfavorable conditions and unfortunate surroundings should prevent his carrying out successfully this contemplated work in time, he must, according to his revealed purpose, pursue it to its consummation in eternity. And this is most explicitly the leading thought in the reference which we have under consideration.

Only think of it for one moment seriously and devoutly: Jesus tells us that there are lost souls perhaps in perdition now who would have been saved and happy in heaven if they could have had certain privileges and advantages which were afforded to some other people. He says that if the wonderful opportunities had been given to the ancient, rich, proud, gay, frolicsome, and idolatrous Phœnician cities, beautifully situated on the Mediterranean coast—magnificent Tyre and Sidon—which were enjoyed by Chorazin and Bethsaida, the indifferent and unbelieving cities on the happy beach of the lovely Galilean sea, their inhabitants "would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes"; and instead of weeping and wailing in the regions of the damned, they would be shouting and

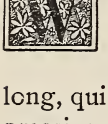
rejoicing in the realm of the saved in glory; for our blessed Lord says so.

And if Sodom, the wicked, wealthy, luxurious, wanton, and shameless city of the fair and fertile Plain of the Jordan, "like the garden of Jehovah," could have received the superior blessings that were poured forth in rich and abundant showers upon lofty and self-exalted Capernaum, the home of "the Son of man," upon the border of the lake of Gennesaret, whose shining waves are still seen leaping in sparkling glee through the sunlight upon the white strand, instead of having been swept from the face of the earth by a raging storm of fiery indignation sent from the incensed heavens, would have been yet standing in the days of Christ; for he says so.

And it follows that the doom-stricken citizens, in lieu of "suffering the punishment of eternal fire," would have been numbered with "the spirits of just men made perfect."

But may not these blessings and opportunities still be extended to them in the lapsing ages of the endless future, if God wills it so? And if, as we believe, he is impartial to all and unfair to none; if he desires, as the Scriptures teach, the salvation and happiness of the whole human family, is he not bound by every principle of his nature to still give the things which, if given, would result in the rescue and restoration of the lost inhabitants of the unfortunate cities already mentioned? And if to them, why not to all others similarly situated? And if we rely fully and implicitly upon what St. Paul says of him, we can expect nothing less of him. The great apostle affirms, "For there is no respect of persons with God."

Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in their tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.



E find ourselves again dealing with the exact language of our Lord. Here he is heard as he disposes of the mighty questions of the universal resurrection of the dead from their long, quiet resting place in the grave, and also the impressive solemnities and momentous decisions of the general judgment, which will introduce the righteous to the full enjoyment of eternal life and consign the wicked to the agonies of condign punishment. This passage of inspired truth and that one in the fifteenth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles are the only places in the New Testament writings where the bodily resurrection of both good and bad people is positively asserted. Here the divine Teacher tells us plainly that the just will be raised up from their mortal slumbers in "the dull earth" to life again, and that the unjust also shall come up out of their vacated tombs to judgment, or *condemnation.*

But after all, he does not give us the least information as to how long these respective allotments shall be continued to the two classes designated by him, or to either of them taken separately. Perhaps the reason for this very expressive reticence upon his part is to be found in the clearly revealed and well-established fact that both estates are necessarily conditional and must remain so forever. And this being the case, they are made altogether dependent upon the free agency of the participants themselves.

Men must be as responsible in the future for their

conduct as they are in this life, since God can neither be honored nor dishonored in a mere mechanical service. So the continuation of their condition, or any change that may be made in the life which lies beyond the grave, the resurrection, and the judgment, must be reserved to their own choice. Jesus teaches us, both by implication and direct enunciation, that men have the same power to form their character and fix their destiny after death that they possess before their demise. The statements of the Scripture concerning the present spiritual conditions of men and their chances in the uncertainties of the future for endless happiness or misery are always presented as being conditional. Sometimes the condition is prominently expressed, but it is often apparently concealed. Take as an illustration of the latter part of this proposition that remarkably strong declaration of our Lord which, at the first glance, would seem to teach point-blank that the destinies of men are settled summarily and unchangeably for time and eternity, on this side of that dim and mysterious boundary line which lies between life and death:

> He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not (Greek, *disbelieveth*) the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

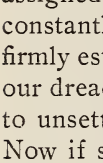
Now this is a very plain and positive affirmation of a powerful truth. But who would think of contending in a serious way that because a sinner is at the present moment in a state of obduracy and disobedience which closes his eyes to the offer of eternal life, and places him under the abiding displeasure of God, he cannot, at any time that he may wish to do so, repent of his sins, believe in Jesus, be forgiven, and attain to

the happiness of heaven? Else, why do we constantly repeat with zeal and earnestness the call of mercy to him? And it is as reasonable to suppose, and as scriptural to conclude, that a man who now believes with all his heart "unto" (Greek, *into*) "righteousness," and "hath eternal life," may, in an evil hour, act so as to forfeit the blessed relation which he sustains to God, and become a castaway.

Then, with these weighty truths before us, we may be allowed to ask the following question: Can it be possible that notwithstanding our marvelous capacity and competency for easily and thoroughly changing our purposes and plans, during the whole course of our lives here, so as to meet the demands and emergencies upon us, still, we shall, in the few brief years assigned to us, with all the fearful disadvantages which constantly beset us from the cradle to the grave, so firmly establish our habits in vice and iniquity as to fix our dreadful doom for woe that we shall never be able to unsettle or reverse it while the eternal ages roll? Now if such really be the case with us, we may with just amazement and bitter disappointment exclaim with the wondering poet:

> Great God! on what a slender thread
> Hang everlasting things!

Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.



T. PAUL here gives us his idea of the nature and duration of the future punishment of the wicked. And surely no treatise on this subject can be complete which fails to embody in it the views of the great Jewish apostle of the

Gentiles. From his remarkably clear and concise statement of the question, we learn that in his opinion, which is an inspired one, the lost must endure conscious pain in that world which lies beyond the borders of time, as they will be banished "from the face of the Lord," shut out from all pleasant scenery, and confined in woe, with all the haunting memories of the past lingering about them and the frightful inticipations of the future rising to view. But surely the most horrible of all the sensations that can possibly come to the wicked in the future world will seize upon them when they awake fully to the fearful realization of the fact that their impurities and iniquities have incapacitated them for enjoying the approving countenance of their loving Father in heaven, or for appreciating the bright and blissful manifestations of his power and glory in the magnificent works of his hands in creation, or even of the benevolent dispensation of his mercies and favor in the grand scheme of human redemption.

Then after all, perdition, in its truest and fullest sense, may consist simply in the loss or privation of moral competency and spiritual fitness for holding communion with God, on account of wickedness of heart and sinfulness of life. And Cain's awful experience is a most striking and impressive exemplification of this frightful fact:

> And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid.

This is the bitter lamentation of the first man, born of woman, that was cast into hell. In his case banishment "from the face of the ground" evidently did not

mean a physical separation from the surface of the earth; nor did being hid from the face of Jehovah signify a literal concealment from the presence of the Lord, in the common acceptation of the term.

Long after the utterance of this sad exclamation of immeasurable and intolerable anguish, he was seen walking about, and working upon the earth. He doubtless continued to cultivate the rich, prolific soil of the ground as he had formerly done, and it yielded its productions in unstinted abundance to him; but he found no pleasure in the most delicious fruits or delight in the sweetest flowers which it brought forth in ready response to his industrious and skillful toil. After his great crime which he had unfortunately committed, nature in all directions looked dreary and dark to him. The heavens above were dusky, the waters below were dull, the air he breathed was suffocating, and the whole world wore a sad appearance. His family and friends gazed upon him with a melancholy mien of threatening disapproval. He felt lonely, guilty, and forsaken. And when he tried to turn away from these disagreeable and distressing scenes, and looked upward to Jehovah that he might obtain relief, he found that he was no longer permitted to behold the tender, complacent smiles of his heavenly Father's benignant countenance, which in the earlier days of his innocency and purity enraptured his untarnished soul, but which since his nefarious act of fratricidal murder were strangely converted into repellent frowns of mournful wrath toward him.

But at last the wretched culprit discovers that these fearful changes are all within himself and brought about solely by himself. It was the distracting remorse

of his own guilty soul which had driven all peace of mind away from him and left him burning in the raging fires of hell—the most consummate of all perditions. And such is St. Paul's conception of the ruin of the soul in the world to come. And it is bad enough. But how long will it last?

It must continue till repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ shall bring back to the forgiven and liberated prisoner the restored joys of purity of heart and holiness of life. And it is the supreme excellency of the divine system of recovering mercy that it secures to all men forever the privilege and power of seeking and obtaining salvation from sin and destruction in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So we may fondly hope that some time in the long, weary stretches of the ages to come the last lost wanderer will be gathered safely home.

And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Greek, *Gehenna*).

OR special reasons, we have reserved the examination of this text of Scripture for the last.

Jesus employs the word Gehenna, which has become the accepted term in the New Testament for the name and symbol of the world of woe which we commonly call hell, about eleven times in his discourses as reported to us by the evangelists. He uses it seven times in the gospel of Matthew, three times in the gospel of Mark, and once in the gospel of Luke. And we do not find it anywhere else in the gospels,

epistles, or apocalypse, except once in the epistle of St. James. It does not occur in Acts, nor in the writings of St. John, of St. Paul, of St. Peter, of St. Jude, nor in the epistle to Hebrews. Its entire absence from these very important portions of inspiration, to say the least of it, is quite suggestive. And it is also worthy of consideration that our Lord never speaks of it as denoting endless torture. He attaches no such an idea to it. But in every case, where it is alluded to by him, its easiest and most natural application would be to temporary punishment, inflicted by an earthly tribunal upon offenders against law and order in this life. Taken in its literal Hebrew sense it means the valey of Hinnom, or of the son, or of the children of Hinnom. It is mentioned thirteen times in the Old Testament Scriptures. We come upon it first in the book of Joshua. Gehenna, or Hinnom, was a deep, rough, rocky valley on the south and west of Jerusalem, and just outside of the city limits.

The degrading and detestable worship of Moloch, an Ammonitish idol god, was set up and practiced in the accursed ravine, which made it famous for extreme wickedness and heart-rending horrors.

And it is also spoken of as having been defiled by cruelly burning living human beings to death with flaming fire, and especially helpless infants and little children. Now all these things were utterly abhorrent to God, and his hottest anger and deepest displeasure were ever manifested against them.

And finally, the place became the general receptacle, or common cesspool, for all the vast accumulations of filth and pollution in and about the city. And to prevent the poisonous miasm arising from such mighty

masses of decay and putrefaction from pervading the whole city and destroying its population with sickness and death, undying fires were kindled up and kept burning perpetually in Gehenna. The black columns of smoke rolling up from this dismal hollow bedimmed the brightness of the day, and the flaring flames that flashed from its yawning depths made the darkness of the night hideous. So in the run of the years this abominable glen came to be regarded and spoken of as a suitable emblem of the world of wretchedness and woe. And "the Son of man" simply used this popular word, and in fact all the other numerous terms employed by him in connection with the punishment of the wicked in the future world, in a metaphorical sense. And in this custom he is followed by all the other writers in the New Testament.

For instance, it is spoken of as being "outer darkness," "the blackness of darkness," "the furnace of fire," "the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone," "unquenchable fire," "anguish in this flame," "the smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever," "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

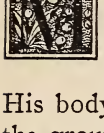
It would seem that nothing could be made clearer to the mind of the attentive reader than that all these most terrific expressions are intended by the divine writers themselves to be taken as highly figurative in their meaning and application. They cannot be understood as being literal. It is an evident fact that perdition, whatever it may be, cannot possibly be all of these fearful things at the same time; and so it stands to reason that it is not any one of them in a material sense. The truth is that the indiscriminate use of them

by our Lord and his apostles utterly demolishes the popular theory that physical torture, or any kind of outward appliances, will be resorted to in administering penalty to the wicked in the world to come. All of these strong and significant illustrations were selected by Jesus from common scenes of suffering as they may be witnessed by us in the observations of daily life. But it by no means follows that he intends us to receive them according to the letter. And we cannot afford to undertake to force upon them any such an adventitious construction. And we ought not to attempt such a thing.

It is the deep, unrelieved gloom and the fierce anguish of the guilty conscience which creates for the condemned sinner "the outer darkness"; and so it is the keen, penetrating pang of remorse that makes for him the "lake of fire that burneth with brimstone."

And when carefully and candidly studied it will be seen that none of these sayings do necessarily teach that the chastisements of the wicked and lost must last forever. No such an inference can be drawn from them by any fair means. But they do settle one thing beyond a doubt; and that is this: every impenitent sinner, whether in the flesh or out of it, whether on earth or in perdition, must suffer condemnation as long as he remains refractory and unbelieving. So his hell is a matter of his own choosing. And thus it must be with him always. For while he continues in his structure and nature as he now is, he must be regarded as responsible for his own condition, whatever it may be, for it is the direct result of his conduct. And for this reason his destiny must be perpetually placed in his own power and kept at his own disposal. Nei-

ther time, place, nor surroundings can materially affect him in this respect.



AN is a curious being. He is mysterious in his essence and complicated in his component parts and mechanism. He strangely combines in himself two distinct substances. His body is composed of the dry, pulverized dust of the ground, and his spirit is the vital breath of Jehovah God. Then, in his substantial being, he is dust and breath—dust of earth and breath of God.

But these two diverse elements in man are so remote from each other that it becomes indispensably necessary that there shall be an intermediate principle in him, partaking in some sort and measure of the disposition and character of both, so that it may hold them together in harmony and keep them in the bonds of peace. Now the soul possesses this magic power and exercises this magnetic influence. It can bring the deathless spirit and mortal body into the closest union and happiest relations with each other.

But when the soul in man is dominated by the corporeal nature, which is too often the case with him, it is pulled away from its better and happier associations with the spirit and prostituted to low, base, fleshly, brutish habits. And then the whole man sinks down to ruin. But on the other hand, if the spirit is allowed to rule supreme, as is its inherent right to do, the entirety of the three natures, in perfect accord with each other, rises to the most exalted position, and makes the grandest acquisitions in lawful sensuous pleasures, intellectual attainments, and spiritual enjoyments.

The soul may be regarded as the divinely appointed daysman, acting with authority between the highest and lowest powers in man—the spirit and body.

But when the soul surrenders itself wantonly to the service and interest of the body, as it frequently does, in the strong scriptural sense of the expression, it kills the spirit. But when it wisely submits itself to the direction and control of the spirit, it mortifies the body, and puts it to death. Then the spirit is enabled to lift it up to the sublimest aspirations and the best performances of which it is capable.

The spirit is the organ of God-consciousness in man. It brings him into direct contact with heaven, and holds him in communion with the Infinite Source of all excellence and goodness. It opens up to him his only opportunities for knowing, loving, and serving God, getting home to glory, and living forever with his Creator, Redeemer, and Father.

But the gross "fleshly lusts" and worldly ambitions are the possessions of the body, and belong to it in "fee simple."

It is the sovereign right and province of the soul to decide with authority whether the body with its earthly tendencies, or the spirit with its heavenly aspirations, shall take the lead in the life of man, both in time and eternity. When the soul panders to the debasing appetites and voluptuous passions of the body, a career of dissipation and debauchery quickly follows. But if the soul give heed to the earnest solicitations and judicious pleadings of the spirit, a life of purity and holiness sets up as the felicitous result. In a life of wickedness, the soul and body are always combined against the spirit. But in a life of virtue and righteous-

ness, the spirit and soul are joined together against the body, led on by the Holy Spirit.

As an established rule, under the present constitution and organization of things, temptation to commit sin more frequently enters the soul through the body than otherwise. But the admission of sin into the soul in any way whatever is sure to terminate in the death of the spirit. Consequently, in speaking of the condition of a wicked man, we are in the habit of saying that he is dead in "trespasses and sins." And the peculiar declaration is scriptural. It belongs to Pauline theology.

But what do we really mean by this singular form of speech? We frequently say, without the least hesitancy, that "the sinner is dead." Then it becomes necessary for us to explain more clearly and definitely the exact idea which we wish to convey by the constant use of the expression, for it is confusing and puzzling to a great many. How is the sinner dead? why is he dead? and what is that about him which is dead?

Certainly it is not his body. That part of him may be perfectly healthy and all right in every way. On close examination by competent authority, it is found to be entirely sound in all its members and organs. It is normal, prompt, and regular in all its arrangements, actions, and functions. Nothing is wrong or out of order with his body. There is no difficulty whatever there.

Neither is it his soul that is dead. The trouble is not in that department of the man. It does not lie in that direction. His mind is clear, vigorous, comprehensive, energetic, and perfectly reliable in all its phe-

nomena and operations. He has a sane mind in a sound body.

But it is his spirit that is dead. And that is the highest, best, and divinest factor in his deeply mysterious nature.

When the first act of disobedience is intelligently, deliberately, and willfully committed against the laws of God, the spirit collapses at once. It falls away from the Fountain of life, and drops into the dismal shades and dull slumbers of spiritual and eternal death. Thus it is that the original sin, intentionally and defiantly perpetrated by an erring human being, immediately kills the supreme faculty of life in him.

Then how can that dead spirit in man ever be revived and reanimated?

> And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins.
>
> And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.
>
> But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.

The Spirit of God communicates the initial pulsation of life to the responsive spirit of man. And the divine current of this returning life to the reviving spirit of man is rolled forward by it, in conjunction with the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, into the receptive soul.

And then, by a simultaneous movement with the consenting soul, the resuscitated spirit, still assisted by the power of the almighty Spirit of God, forthwith sends this recovered life coursing through the unresisting body:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

So the whole man, in every element of his complicated make-up, is embraced in the benefits and blessings of this new life. The body, on account of its intimate relation and vital connection with the thinking soul and worshiping spirit, is also rendered competent with them of realizing the same exhilarating joy of this divine quickening. And further, like its higher and nobler companions, in consideration of its incomprehensible association with them, it is made capable of being impressed and consciously affected by the Spirit of God and thrilled with the transporting raptures of spiritual and eternal life. Hence in conversion the body is really happy as well as the soul and spirit. Such is the divine diffusion and development of spiritual life in man.

But we may also clearly trace out the process of spiritual death in him. When the corporeal nature obtains the decided ascendency in him, and holds undisputed control over the soul, he is thrown into a deplorable plight. It is with him as when a proud, cruel, ambitious, and incompetent despot manages to mount the throne, wear the undeserved crown, grasp the stolen scepter, and recklessly plunge the whole province into trouble and disorder. Just so when the usurping body seizes the reins of government, so to speak, and sways the entire man. Most truly the soul is then humiliated and degraded through the perverted appetites and depraved passions of the tyrannical body; and the unhappy and defenseless spirit is cap-

tured and put to death without pity. Thus the man is stripped of his grandeur and glory, and left a sad wreck —"a sight which might make the angels weep."

CRIPTURAL and scientific anthropology presents two very distinct views of man. Science teaches that he has only two things in his construction—matter and mind, body and soul. But the Bible holds another opinion concerning him. It teaches that he is compounded of body, soul, and spirit. Now if the scholastic theory, which is the popular one, were true, it might be different with him at death from what it is. In that case, it is more than likely that the soul would be dissipated at the dissolution of the body and the spirit reabsorbed in universal Deity. But as the Scripture system must be correct, we can readily see that as the spirit dwells in the soul, and the soul resides in the body, therefore they must survive the death of the body, and thus preserve personal existence and identity beyond the grave. And during the interval which passes between the death of the body and its resurrection, the power of the spirit over the soul will be greatly increased; and so, aided by the influence of the Holy Spirit, it may succeed in bringing about its reconciliation to God.

If this should occur, the resurrection body will be subordinated at once to the heavenly life. But if it should fail, the spirit and soul must enter the resurrection body in a state of alienation from God, be condemned in judgment, and remanded to suffering, which will become more intense and intolerable than it was

in the intermediate state. And this wretched condition will continue until the soul decides to yield with the spirit to God, carrying the body along with it. The soul, at will, places the body or spirit in the ascendency. But it costs it an heroic struggle to do it. And at last, when the final conflict comes, it will conquer its old antagonist in an absolute sense; and then, with the flush of victory upon it, recognize the rightful supremacy of the spirit, which will bring the whole man into the full possession of eternal life. And this seems to be the meaning of St. Paul when he says:

It is sown a natural (Greek, *psychical,* or English, *soulical*) body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural (*soulical*) body, there is also a spiritual body.

Not that the substance of the body in the resurrection will be changed. It will not. The body which we have now is the soulical body. But as to its essence it is material, and it will remain so forever. And as it is adapted to the soul now and answers its purposes, so it will be adapted to the spirit then and answer its purposes. In the present life, the soul, while inhabiting the soulical body, is strongly drawn toward the world and its lusts. This renders a religious life very difficult. But the spirit and soul, dwelling together in the spiritual body in the boundless ages of the future, will be powerfully attracted toward God and holiness.

E talk about Mount Calvary and the redemption which Jesus wrought out there upon the fatal beam of the rugged cross as if, comparatively speaking, it were but a little thing at last. In our thought, as we are accustomed to ex-

press it, by the crucifixion he only rescued man from ruin. And even with that we hold that a majority of the human race will be lost forever, while a mere minority may finally be able to reap everlasting blessings from his sacrificial death. It would be more reasonable to contend that the battle of Waterloo affected nobody outside of the little kingdom of Belgium. And who would dare make such a suggestion in the face of the well-known fact that the great powers of Europe obtained the largest blessings and most important advantages from it? And it may be that even France herself derived a better benefit from the disasters of that sad day than she could have realized from any victory that she might have won on the bloody field.

All of the inspired writers, and especially John and Paul, indulge in the largest views of the unrestrained results of the atonement made by Jesus Christ upon the hills of Jerusalem. In their unclouded conceptions, they reach the coasts of all the revolving worlds and pervade their populations with their unlimited influences for everlasting good. They boldly hold that the cross antedates the very existence of the universe itself. Peter says that he "was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world" (Greek, *cosmos*). And John declares that he is "the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world" (Greek, *cosmos*, quoted from the original of the text of Westcott and Hort). Here he preesnts the mediatorial work of our Lord not simply as a contemplated scheme, matured and adjusted in the Divine Mind, but as an accomplished fact from the origin of all things. And it is quite likely that we have never yet fully sounded

the mighty depths of meaning in that fine and most familiar saying of the beloved disciple in regard to this particular feature of this very matter:

For God so loved the world (*cosmos*), that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

He does not tell us that he so loved the earth which is the home of man. This restrictive word occurs often in the New Testament writings, but it is never found in connection with any reference to the extent of the atonement in its application to the needs of the disobedient and disaffected in the government of God. The indefinite term, cosmos, world, or universe, is always used for this purpose. It is employed about one hundred and fourteen times in the writings of St. John, and about forty-seven times in the epistles of St. Paul. The word itself seems to denote the fact that the whole universe of worlds is deeply involved and vitally interested in the redeeming work of "the Son of man"; and that finally it must, in all of its various parts, somehow or another, be brought by it into perfect harmony with the will of God. This is not to be accomplished by the compulsory power of his omnipotent arm, but rather by the irresistible force of his sovereign love, which will finally be met with the responsive faith of the creature, which will be voluntarily and cheerfully given whether man, angel, or any other order of beings.

It may require many millions of ages to consummate this, the happiest of all reconciliations. But it must be done. And at last all wayward worlds will drop back into their proper places; and then the black clouds of sin and death will roll away from their over-

cast skies, leaving them flaming forever with the beautiful light of an abiding purity.

IT is said that "the demons also believe, and shudder." When men believe and fear, we say that it is the beginning of wisdom with them. Then why should we conclude, when demons do the same thing—believe and fear—that they do so only in view of their inevitable and eternal damnation? How can we know that? In their case may it not indicate that initial effort—which in the end must prove successful—to break asunder the "everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" with which they are bound, in order that they may return to their primordial fealty to God, recover "their proper habitation," and regain their lost "principality"? This seems at least probable. They are obliged to be wheat or chaff. If they become good grain, they will be garnered in the bins of glory; "but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." Then it must be complete salvation or entire destruction. If there should be such a creature found anywhere in the great moral government of God as an incorrigibly wicked thing, it must be utterly consumed—*obliterated*. But annihilation does not seem to find favor with the Supreme Architect of all things, or to enter into his policy at any point. He blots out nothing that he has made. There is no reason why he should. He need make no such blunder. His infinite wisdom guides him safely. However, he does change all things from an inferior to a better condition. He works according to that plan. He is

always lifting things from a lower to a higher position. But he has never yet, so far as our knowledge goes, entirely demolished anything which he has brought into existence. Hence we conclude that he will not wipe out a single atom of matter that he has produced. Then he surely will not reduce an ethereal, spiritual essence to nothingness.

But he has revealed it as being his unyielding and unfailing purpose to swing back the whole of the vast universe of countless worlds from all defections, deviations, and deflections, which have in any way disturbed or troubled their former relations with him, into his eternal and unchangeable favor, through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. And when our divine Lord shall have fully accomplished this grand restoration and confirmation of all things in endless life and happiness, then the everlasting Father will usher in the bright coronation day of the victorious "Son of man," and will summon all the worlds, rolling through the steadily brightening fields of the vast and inconceivable infinitudes of "boundless space," from the great central orb which is the glorious palace of the eternal King of peace and righteousness, far out to where the most distant planet floats softly upon the dim outlines of creation, to join in the ever-flowing, sweet, and sublime strains of the grand universal anthem of perfect praise and perpetual triumph:

> Bring forth the royal diadem,
> And crown him Lord of all.

Analytical Contents,

With Scripture Quotations and References.

PREFATORY NOTE.

	PAGE
Things in the future speculative	5
We cannot afford dogmatism	5
Liberty of speech claimed	6
We cannot always agree with others	6
All things in a transition state	6
Sympathy of the reading public desired	7
The book committed to its mission	7

PART I.

A Plain, Simple Presentation of the Subject.

Man is on trial	9
Future punishment specially discussed	9
Man a responsible being	10
Character and destiny	10
Responsibility must cease with the end of freedom	11
Scripture reference, Gen. xviii. 25	11
Endless punishment unreasonable	12
Annihilation preferable to eternal pain	12
Man in time and eternity	13
He makes his own happiness or wretchedness	13
Man in time and eternity	14
His destiny never unchangeably fixed	15
If the saved may be lost, the lost may be saved	15
Heaven should always be as accessible to men as hell	16
The Fatherhood of God in this connection	17
Scripture reference, Matt. vii. 11	17
Parental chastisement considered	17
All punishment ought to be corrective	17
Scripture reference, Heb. xii. 9	18
God will always help us to be good and happy	18
Scripture reference, John iii. 16	18
Our views of this question will not please all	19
Scripture reference, Eccles. x. 8	19

PAGE

What really constitutes heaven or hell..... 19
The old idea of hell..... 20
The place does not make heaven or hell..... 20
What man is and does makes him happy or miserable.... 21
Scripture references, Heb. vi. 5; John iii. 18..... 22
Probation is man's normal condition..... 22
All men will finally be saved..... 23
We expect changes at death which may not occur..... 23
Man a composite being..... 24
Appetites and passions belong to the body..... 25
They are given to man for noble purposes..... 25
They belong to this life only..... 26
Scripture reference, Luke xx. 34-36..... 26
The mental faculties belong to the soul..... 26
The religious capacities belong to the spirit..... 27
Scripture reference, Heb. i. 14..... 27
With man the occasion of sin is in the body..... 27
The first sin committed by man..... 27
Jesus was also tempted through the body..... 28
The possibility of man's salvation is in his spirit..... 29
The carnal and spiritual forces meet in his soul..... 29
Corporeal death a blessing to man..... 29
We are not advocating Universalism..... 31
Calvinism 32
Scripture reference, Acts ii. 22-24..... 32
Universalism in an unlimited sense..... 32
Calvinism and Universalism compared..... 32
Restorationism 33
Roman Catholic purgatory..... 33
Future punishment a great question..... 34
Punishment in both worlds the same..... 36
Remorse of conscience punishment for sin..... 36
As long as men sin they must suffer..... 37
When sin ceases perdition ends..... 37

PART II.

THE SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.

The Bible consulted for and against our views..... 39
The American Revised Version used..... 39
The Jews believed in a future state for man..... 39

PAGE
The Jews had vague notions of the future..... 39
In their thought the dead all go to the same place..... 40
Scripture reference, 2 Kings xxii. 20..... 40
The name of the intermediate place is Sheol..... 40
In Greek it is called Hades..... 40
The Hebrews looked upon it as a gloomy place..... 40
Scripture quotation, Job x. 20-22..... 41
Comments on the quotation..... 41
The New Testament idea more cheerful..... 41
Scripture quotation, Rev. xiv. 13..... 41
Comments on the quotation..... 41
A saint brought the message from paradise..... 42
Scripture quotation, Rev. xxii. 8, 9..... 42
Comments on the quotation..... 42
Scripture references, Isa. xxxiii. 17; Luke xvi. 25..... 43
Our departed friends still feel an interest in us..... 43
Scripture reference, 1 Tim. vi. 12..... 44
Not place, but condition, makes happiness or misery..... 44
Paradise and Tartarus..... 44
Jesus recognizes these divisions in Hades..... 45
The condition of the man makes the place what it is..... 45
Both malefactors entered Hades together..... 45
The good and bad are together in Hades..... 46
Scripture quotation, 1 Sam. xxviii. 19..... 46
Comments on the quotation..... 46
The teaching of Jesus about Hades..... 47
Scripture quotation, Luke xvi. 23..... 47
Comments on the quotation..... 47
Scripture reference, Gen. xviii. 23..... 48
The gulf between the rich man and Lazarus..... 48
Scripture quotation, Luke xvi. 26..... 48
Comments on the quotation..... 48
Scripture references, 1 John iii. 14; Acts xxvi. 18..... 49
Man an interesting study..... 50
Bible account of his origin..... 50
Scripture quotation, Gen. ii. 7..... 51
Unity of the human race..... 51
Scripture quotation, Acts xvii. 26..... 51
Man a unity, duality, and trinity..... 51
Construction of the human body..... 52

PAGE

Scripture quotation, Psa. cxxxix. 14..... 53
Man's pneumatic nature..... 53
Scripture quotations, Job xxvii. 3; Job xxxii. 8..... 54
Man's psychical nature..... 54
Man in connection with the government of God..... 55
The body brings man into contact with this world..... 55
Man's spirit brings him into communion with God..... 55
Scripture quotations, Heb. xii. 9; Acts xvii. 28..... 55
The endowments of the spirit..... 56
The powers of the soul..... 56
The possessions of the body..... 56
Scripture reference, 1 Peter ii. 11..... 56
The course which sin takes in man..... 56
Scripture quotation, James i. 13-15..... 56
The process of salvation in man..... 56
Scripture quotations, John vi. 63; John iii. 6..... 57
The Spirit of God can quicken the spirit of man..... 57
Scripture quotation, 1 Cor. ii. 14..... 57
God is not comprehended by an intellectual grasp..... 58
God can be known by a spiritual effort..... 58
Scripture reference, 1 Thess. v. 23..... 59
The distinction between spirit and soul..... 59
Dichotomy is the teaching of the schools..... 59
Trichotomy is the doctrine of the Bible..... 59
Scripture quotation, Gen. i. 26..... 59
Comments on the quotation..... 59
Mary, the mother of Jesus, observes the distinction..... 60
Scripture quotation, Luke i. 46, 47..... 60
Comments on the quotation..... 60
Conflict between the soul and body..... 61
Scripture quotation, Rom. vii. 18, 19..... 61
Comments on the quotation..... 61
What a man consumes in a year..... 62
Man's only sure course for salvation..... 63
Man must subdue his body..... 63
Scripture quotation, 1 Cor. ix. 27..... 63
Comments on the quotation..... 63
The soul must submit itself to the spirit..... 65
The soul the deciding power in man..... 65
Jesus always addresses man as a free agent..... 65

PAGE
Scripture quotation, Luke ix. 23..... 65
Comments on the quotation..... 65
Scripture quotation, John vii. 17..... 66
Comments on the quotation..... 66
The things which make man an eternal probationer..... 67
All men will finally be confirmed in eternal life..... 67
Probation must last till all men are saved..... 68
First Class of Scripture Proofs—*Inferential*..... 68
Priesthood of Jesus..... 68
Scripture quotation, Heb. vii. 23-25..... 68
Comments on the quotation..... 69
Our Lord did not come from Levi's tribe..... 69
Scripture quotation, Heb. vii. 14-16..... 69
Comments on the quotation..... 69
Object of our Lord's baptism..... 69
Scripture quotation, John i. 31-34..... 70
Comments on the quotation..... 70
Jesus could not be a priest and remain on earth..... 70
Scripture quotation, Heb. viii. 4..... 70
Comments on the quotation..... 71
Scripture references, Heb. ii. 10; Heb. iv. 15; Heb. ix. 12. 71
Man's probation does not end at death..... 71
The ends of the earth called to salvation..... 72
Scripture quotation, Isa. xlv. 22, 23..... 72
Comments on the quotation..... 72
Christ's dominion over the whole earth..... 73
Scripture quotation, Psa. ii. 7, 8..... 73
Comments on the quotation..... 73
The universal commission..... 74
Scripture quotation, Matt. xxviii. 18-20..... 74
Comments on the quotation..... 74
Second Class of Scripture Proofs—*Affirmative*..... 76
The crisis of the world..... 76
Scripture quotation, John xii. 31, 32..... 76
Comments on the quotation..... 76
Scripture references, Heb. ii. 14, 15; Gen. iii. 15..... 77
The whole universe reconciled to God through Christ.... 79
Scripture quotation, Col. i. 19, 20..... 79
Comments on the quotation..... 79
Scripture reference, Jer. xxxi. 3..... 80

PAGE
All things created in, by, and for Christ..... 81
Scripture quotation, Col. i. 16, 17..... 81
Comments on the quotation..... 81
All things headed up in Christ..... 84
Scripture quotation, Ephes. i. 9, 10..... 84
Comments on the quotation..... 84
Scripture reference, 2 Cor. v. 19..... 84
Attractions of the cross of Christ..... 85
Are fallen angels embraced in redemption?..... 85
The restoration of all things..... 85
Scripture quotation, Acts iii. 20, 21..... 85
Comments on the quotation..... 85
The entire creation worshiping Christ..... 86
Scripture quotation, Phil. ii. 9, 10..... 86
Comments on the quotation..... 86
All creation praising the Lamb..... 88
Scripture quotation, Rev. v. 13..... 88
Comments on the quotation..... 88
Christ must reign till he conquers all his enemies..... 88
Scripture quotation, 1 Cor. xv. 24-26..... 88
Comments on the quotation..... 88
Scripture references, Luke i. 33; Matt. v. 3..... 89
Scripture reference, 1 Cor. xv. 28..... 90
Man's relation to the atonement..... 91
Christ's mission into our world..... 92
Scripture quotation, Luke xix. 10..... 92
Comments on the quotation..... 92
Scripture references, John xvii. 5; Gal. iv. 4..... 92
Three great parables..... 92
The parable of the lost sheep..... 93
Scripture quotation, Luke xv. 3-7..... 93
Comments on the quotation..... 93
Parable of the lost piece of money..... 95
Scripture quotation, Luke xv. 8-10..... 95
Comments on the quotation..... 95
Parable of the prodigal son..... 96
Scripture quotation, Luke xv. 11-32..... 96
Comments on the quotation..... 97
Angels rejoice over the sinner's conversion..... 100
Our departed friends constantly behold us..... 101

PAGE
Scripture reference, Heb. xii. 1 101
The prodigal son's great feast 101
The last lost sheep was found 102
The last lost piece of silver was found 102
The last prodigal son came home 102
The parables teach the recovery of all men 102
Scripture reference, Rev. xix. 6 103
The unity of design in the parables 103
Third Class of Scripture Proofs—*Negative* 103
The wicked turned back unto Sheol 103
Scripture quotation, Psa. ix. 17 103
Comments on the quotation 103
Scripture reference, Psa. ix. 3 104
The fallen tree 105
Scripture quotation, Eccles. xi. 3 105
Comments on the quotation 105
Scripture reference, Eccles. xi. 1, 2 106
Scripture reference, Eccles. xi. 3 107
Fate of the king of Babylon 107
Scripture quotation, Isa. xiv. 9 107
Comments on the quotation 107
Devouring fire and everlasting burnings 108
Scripture quotation, Isa. xxxiii. 14 108
Comments on the quotation 108
Scripture reference, Isa. xxxiii. 15-17 109
The dead aroused to doom 110
Scripture quotation, Dan. xii. 2 110
Comments on the quotation 110
The insolvent debtor 112
Scripture quotation, Matt. v. 25, 26 112
Comments on the quotation 112
Scripture reference, Matt. v. 21-24 112
Scripture reference, 2 Cor. v. 10 114
The wicked sent into eternal punishment 116
Scripture quotation, Matt. xxv. 46 116
Comments on the quotation 116
Scripture references, 2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6 118
Heaven and Hell concrete conditions, not abstract places. 119
The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit 120
Scripture quotation, Mark iii. 28-30 120

PAGE
Comments on the quotation..... 120
Scripture references, Mark xiv. 64; Matt. xxvii. 39; Rom. iii. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 13; Ephes. iv. 31; 1 Tim. vi. 4..... 121
Scripture reference, Luke xvi. 24..... 123
Scripture reference, Acts xx. 24..... 125
Sins forgiven in the world to come..... 125
Scripture quotation, Matt. xii. 32..... 125
Comments on the quotation..... 125
Christ preaching to the spirits in prison..... 126
Scripture quotation, 1 Peter iii. 18-20..... 126
Comments on the quotation..... 126
The gospel preached to the dead..... 128
Scripture quotation, 1 Peter iv. 6..... 128
Comments on the quotation..... 128
Differences in advantages among men..... 128
Reason why Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom were lost..... 129
Scripture quotation, Matt. xi. 21-23..... 129
Comments on the quotation..... 129
Scripture reference, Gen. xiii. 10..... 131
Scripture references, Jude 7; Heb. xii. 23; Rom. ii. 11... 131
The dead raised up for judgment..... 132
Scripture quotation, John v. 28, 29..... 132
Comments on the quotation..... 132
Destiny in time or eternity conditional..... 132
Scripture quotation, John iii. 36..... 133
Comments on the quotation..... 133
Scripture reference, Rom. x. 10..... 134
St. Paul's idea of perdition..... 134
Scripture quotation, 2 Thess. i. 9..... 134
Comments on the quotation..... 134
First man born of woman cast into hell..... 135
Scripture quotation, Gen. iv. 13, 14..... 135
Comments on the quotation..... 136
How long punishment in hell will last..... 137
Soul and body destroyed in Gehenna..... 137
Scripture quotation, Matt. x. 28..... 137
Comments on the quotation..... 137
Scripture references, Matt. viii. 12; Jude 13; Matt. xiii. 42; Rev. xix. 20; Matt. iii. 12; Luke xvi. 24; Mark ix. 48 139

PAGE
Man a curious being..... 141
Soul the intermediate power in man..... 141
Body dominating the soul ruins man..... 141
When the spirit is supreme all is safe..... 141
Spirit the organ of God—consciousness..... 142
Soul decides which shall lead, body or spirit..... 142
Sin usually enters the soul through the body..... 143
Sin in the soul kills the spirit..... 143
We say the sinner is dead—what do we mean?..... 143
His body is not dead..... 143
His soul is not dead..... 143
His spirit is dead..... 144
The first sin kills the spirit..... 144
The spirit can be quickened..... 144
Scripture references, Ephes. ii. 1; Col. ii. 13; Rom. viii. 9. 144
The process of spiritual life..... 144
Scripture reference, Rom. viii. 11..... 145
Man's spirit, soul, and body in conversion..... 145
Process of spiritual death..... 145
Scriptural and scientific anthropology..... 146
The spirit and soul in the intermediate state..... 146
The resurrection body..... 147
Scripture quotation, 1 Cor. xv. 44..... 147
Comments on the quotation..... 147
Results of the death of Christ..... 147
Cross antedates the existence of the universe..... 148
Scripture references, 1 Peter i. 20; Rev. xiii. 8..... 148
Christ's death affects the whole universe..... 148
Scripture quotation, John iii. 16..... 149
Comments on the quotation..... 149
Scripture reference, Matt. ix. 6..... 149
Work of redemption consummated..... 149
Condition of the demons..... 150
Scripture reference, James ii. 19..... 150
Scripture reference, Matt. iii. 12..... 150
God's policy salvation, not annihilation..... 150
Jesus crowned King of all worlds..... 151

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